PERCEPTIONS OF ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT AND FOLLOWER READINESS IN MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHERS

Gereon V. Methner

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Committee:

Judy Jackson May, Advisor

Jeanne Novak
Graduate Faculty Representative

Jamie Hollinger

Patrick Pauken

Rachel Vannatta Reinhart
ABSTRACT

Judy Jackson May, Advisor

Twenty first century educational trends in the United States include increased accountability as well as standards that have served to challenge our expectations, practices and perceptions of teaching and learning. Educators, at all levels, are expected to do more with less and therefore must examine, modify, and improve current practices to create more effective systems. Research strongly supports the development of the principal-teacher relationship as a vital element in creating a positive learning environment laying the foundation for increased student achievement.

The purpose of this correlational study was to examine how K-12 teachers perceived administrative support and how these perceptions were predictive of teacher self-reported follower readiness (Willingness and Ability) to engage in practices that enhance the learning community. Middle school teachers from three districts completed the Methner Administrative Support Survey (MASS) to ascertain their perceptions of principal support and the correlation between perceived support and their willingness and ability.

Significant findings were revealed in four areas of the study. Forward multiple regression analysis found that Reflection and Growth was a significant variable in teacher Willingness and Overall Follower Readiness. Significant differences were also found relative to teacher years of experience in the areas of Instructional Improvement and Feedback. Additionally, Reflection and Growth, Overall Follower Readiness, and Ability were shown to be significant variables where teachers believed that Efforts to Build
Teacher-Principal Relationships were present. And lastly significant mean differences were found between the three school districts in their perceptions of administrative support.

Conclusions drawn from this study suggest that principals might improve teacher willingness by focusing on strategies that promote teacher growth and reflective inquiry. These strategies include but are not limited to: 1) journaling; 2) peer-collaboration; 3) teacher self-analysis of videotaped lessons; and more broadly 4) by establishing schools as learning communities. Additionally, teachers of varying stages in their careers may benefit from individualized and contextualized administrative support, frequent observation and systematic feedback, and mentorship from multiple sources. Central office decision-making frameworks may also consider the value of individualization/contextualization regarding staffing choices for individual buildings. The results of this study seek to provide valuable insight relative to: 1) what teachers perceive is appropriate administrative support; and 2) what skills administrators need to possess to enhance the school learning community.
This work is dedicated to all of the wonderful teaching colleagues who helped me grow as an educator, and to my parents, whose support and guidance gave me the courage to take on new challenges.
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Teacher Perceptions of Administrative Support and Follower Readiness Framework
CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

The dynamic rates of change in our world have placed unprecedented expectations on our nation’s public schools, and one of the single most significant trends in the educational landscape is the increasing focus on accountability measures (Apple, 2006; Grubb, 2009; Hartman, 2003; Kneopple & Reinhart, 2008; Ravitch, 2012; Timperly, 2011; Ware & Kitsantas, 2011; Zhao, 2009). Policies such as No Child Left Behind are driven by accountability measures crafted to improve the educational environment and student achievement, and school leaders are increasingly expected to produce dramatic and significant gains (Lazaridou & Iordanides, 2011). This chapter presents research on how policy changes have placed unprecedented changes and accountability measures on schools. The review also highlights that a positive climate is characterized as a hallmark of successful districts and that the teacher-principal relationship impacts school climate and therefore, ultimately, student success.

In an effort to better understand teacher-principal relationships as they relate to school climate, this study examined the degree to which teacher perceptions of Administrative Support could predict teacher self-reported Follower Readiness for the teaching staffs of three middle schools. Also examined was whether efforts to build teacher-principal relationships, as well as other demographic and school-related variables, significantly influenced teacher perceptions of Administrative Support and Follower Readiness.

Background of the Problem

Many contemporary educational reform efforts have increased scrutiny of public schools, leading to calls for greater accountability and increased student performance (Apple, 2006; Grubb, 2009). Initiatives now becoming fixtures in the educational landscape, such as school choice, standardized testing, and voucher programs have been interpreted by some researchers as
detrimental to the strength of the American public school system, weakening public education by calling unfettered attention to its flaws while simultaneously spreading resources more thinly (Apple, 2006; Ravitch, 2010; Rose, 2009; Zhao, 2009).

At the building level, the increased focus on accountability and achievement has added emphasis to instructional leadership as a critical component of principals’ already heavy workload as business and building managers (Hambright & Franco, 2008). Further compounding the pressure on current principals are efforts to reduce school violence, special education compliance, and the demand for principals to stay current with technology trends (Cornelius & Cornelius, n.d.). The increased scrutiny and expectations placed on principals likely affect teachers, each being inextricably linked to student learning (Lumpkin, 2010). Therefore the call for effective leadership in schools demands earnest and immediate action.

Under the present era of accountability and instructional leadership, the teacher-principal relationship has become very important. There are many factors that influence how teachers and principals view their relationship (Edgerson, Kritsonis, and Herrington, 2006). Local politics, district change initiatives, funding and discipline issues, and extra-curricular activities, for example, are all elements that fuse to impact the teacher-principal relationship. Interactions (both formal and informal) between teachers and administrators, a natural part of the teacher-principal relationship, are meant to improve instruction, but often lack definition, purpose, and focus in efforts to meet the accountability demands of the No Child Left Behind legislation (Daly & Chrispeels, 2008). In addition to addressing achievement gaps among demographic groups, schools are now being asked to do more with less as funding challenges emerge. Budget cuts are a reality in American public education, and many states have imposed significant funding reductions on schools (Picus & Odden, 2011). According to Daly and Chrispeels
(2008), “the next phase of educational leadership will require leaders to question the status quo, facilitate learning in others, and critically examine and support dialogue around long-held structures about the nature and substance of schooling” (p. 57). The latest waves of education reform pose serious challenges, as they test the limits of school personnel.

The achievement-related challenges in American public education push the focus of reform initiatives on instruction. Filtered down to the building level, principals and teachers (because of the direct interaction they have with children on a daily basis) are on the front-lines of the battle to prepare our students to meet the needs of the 21st century workforce. Traditionally, principals hire teachers, manage budgets, respond to community concerns, and set the general tone in a school’s overall culture (Cornelius & Cornelius, n.d.). Principals are now faced with added emphasis on instructional leadership due to contemporary education reform (Hambright & Franco, 2008).

The teacher-principal relationship is crucial in efforts to implement effective instructional leadership and ultimately to improve student achievement (Shouppe & Pate, 2010). Although an argument is easily made that instructional leadership has always been a critical component of the principal’s responsibility, the accountability movement has, at the very least, seemed to demand more attention to instructional leadership. From a human resources perspective, school leadership is simply expected to do more with less. This is especially difficult given the financial challenges faced by schools. Adding administrative staff to accommodate the increased expectations is simply not feasible in most districts. Hambright and Franco (2008) contend that “the current principal paradigm is too complex and that perhaps a shared leadership paradigm warrants consideration” (p. 267). Because of increased expectations on the role of the principal,
innovative approaches to building-level leadership could engender more effective classroom instruction and foster better teacher-principal relationships.

**Rationale**

Public school districts are increasingly looking to school leaders to create and sustain instructional environments leading to increased academic achievement. Research continues to illustrate that an administrator’s ability to create and maintain positive climate is a hallmark of successful schools (Halawah, 2005; Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Lazaridou & Iordanides, 2011; Rutherford, 1985). Further, teachers who perceive a positive school climate report feelings of appreciation, respect, commitment, and overall satisfaction (Beaudoin, 2011; Zullig, Huener & Patton, 2010).

Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, and Pickeral (2009) cite an increasing body of literature indicating that positive school climate is “associated with and predictive of academic achievement” (p. 181). Moreover, results of a 2011 study by Lazaridou and Iordanides finds that teachers believe school leaders can increase school effectiveness by creating an “open climate and making sure appropriate resources are available for instruction” (p. 3). On the other hand, a climate that impedes the development of collaboration, trust, and transparency deters creativity, transparency, and connectedness (Beaudoin, 2011). The task, then, for educational leadership is to create and nurture a positive building-level climate in the face of seemingly insurmountable challenges posed by educational reform. In a recent biographical work of Thomas Jefferson, Meacham (2012) asserts that “Our greatest leaders are neither dreamers nor dictators; they are, like Jefferson, those who articulate national aspirations yet master the mechanics of influence and know when to depart from dogma” (p. xx). Educator-leaders in the current context, like
Thomas Jefferson during the birth of our nation, are faced with revolutionary expectations in a system that simultaneously demands rigidity and flexibility.

Louis and Wahlstrom (2011) suggest that schools that possess cultures of excellent instruction, shared norms and values, and high levels of organizational trust are more adaptive, have better motivation and commitment, are better at conflict resolution, are more innovative, and are more effective in achieving goals. Green and Cypress (2009) relate that middle schools have additional challenges in meeting the demands of accountability because their students are establishing their personal identities and coping with the demands of peer pressure. According to Bickmore (2011), there is a dearth of research exploring the principalship in the middle grades and the research that does exist often fails to consider individual school uniqueness. The present study analyzed teacher perceptions in three middle schools that may serve to inform effective middle-level instructional leadership research and practice.

School climate is based in part on the teacher-principal relationship because teachers and principals form the core of leadership and action within a school building. The focus of this study was to examine this relationship in terms of teacher perceptions of Administrative Support and self-reported Follower Readiness. Ubben, Hughes, and Norris (2011) assert that “effective instructional leadership requires a complex set of relationships between principals and their beliefs and the surrounding environment of the school” (p. 31). Both teacher and principal effectiveness are delicately and directly interdependent. Many leading researchers in the field of educational administration stress the importance of a positive relationship between teachers and administrators, emphasizing that schools must engender a team attitude where collaboration and transformational leadership replace traditional top-down methods of management (Downey, 2004; Glickman, et al., 2009; Hoy & Miskel, 2005; Protheroe, 2009; Ubben, et al., 2011).
Despite the overwhelming amount of research on educational leadership, Davis (2007) asserts that there still exists a significant gap between research and practice and that little of what is written actually has an impact on classrooms or reform efforts. The present study explores a practical application of research for practitioner-leaders by attempting to identify key areas related to the nature of the teacher-principal relationship and teachers’ self-reported follower readiness.

Teacher and principal effectiveness, school climate, and teacher-principal relationships all offer insight into the culture of a school building. Lumpkin (2010) contends that the principal and teacher are inextricably linked to student success and the nature of interaction between them is essential to understanding the success or failure of education reform centered on student achievement. Thus, innovative approaches to instructional leadership can help principals to be more effective. Downey (2004) relates that the goals of contemporary instructional leadership should be to create relationships between leaders and teachers that promote reflective, interdependent teachers who are committed to examining their teaching practices to improve, and are committed to student learning for higher student achievement.

As the demands on public schools evolve, new approaches may be adopted not only to equip schools to survive public scrutiny, but also to provide students with the best education possible—the central goal of public education. Angelle (2010) states that “the complexity and size of schools systems today are such that one leader cannot meet the demands of daily tasks and problems. Thus, a singular leader-centric school cannot operate as efficiently as one in which leadership roles are distributed” (p. 1). Because providing students with the best education possible is widely accepted as the goal of public education (where the teacher-principal relationship affects school climate, and in the end student success), it is therefore
important to examine teacher perceptions of their building leadership team. This study explores the building-specific teacher-principal relationship in three middle schools from the teachers’ perspective in an attempt to diagnose areas of strength or weakness of building level instructional leadership. Middle school leadership is an underexplored yet critical component of the K-12 experience that is compounded by unique student pressures of identity and peer pressure (Bickmore, 2011; Green & Cypress, 2009). The quality of middle school leadership, as with any building level leadership position, has a tremendous impact on student achievement (Wilcox & Angelis, 2012).

According to Ubben et al. (2011), instructional leadership that was once driven by a more traditional effective schools concept, where principals were the summit of leadership, has now evolved into an environment where the principal is a facilitator of the instructional process. Similarly, Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon (2009) assert that a paradigm shift is occurring from traditional instructional supervision toward a more collegial form of leadership. Instead of a top-down management style, principals must now embrace a different tone when interacting with teachers in order to ensure student growth.

**Purpose of the Study**

Though the concept of the principal as instructional and transformational leader is common in educational research (Downey, 2004; Glickman et al., 2009; Ubben et al., 2011), a survey by the researcher of the literature on studies related to teacher perceptions of administrative support and follower readiness yielded limited, incongruous results. Teacher perceptions of administrative support are based on the theoretical tenets of Downey (2004), as well as other research related to innovative approaches to instructional leadership (Glickman et al., 2009; Ubben et al., 2011); the aggregate of which outline essential components of the
teacher-principal relationship and have informed the creation of the five Administrative Support subscales used in present study. The researcher-developed Methner Administrative Support Survey (MASS) (Instructional Improvement, Feedback, Discourse, Reflection and Growth, and Anxiety). The construct of Follower Readiness in this study (introduced by Hersey et al. 2001) provided a means to test the predictive qualities in the subscales of administrative support on teacher Willingness and Ability to perform their duties and follow change initiatives in the district.

The MASS, a 43-item instrument (33 5-point Likert scale items and 10 demographic and school-related items), was developed based on the tenets of innovative instructional leadership theories as they relate to school climate, teacher-principal relationships, and research related to teacher Follower Readiness (Willingness and Ability).

According to Vecchio, Bullis, and Brazil (2006) the construct of Follower Readiness needs better validation and operationalization. The present study approaches the concept of Follower Readiness through the lens of new-paradigm instructional leadership approaches. Additionally, Protheroe (2009) states that there is a lack of research examining the power of innovative instructional leadership practices such as the walkthrough concept (with its intended focus on engendering self-reflection, common discourse on instruction, and an overall team atmosphere within a school building), citing numerous studies where the implementation of walkthrough programs included limited empirical evidence supporting the promises of a more collegial and productive instructional environment. For the purposes of this study, new paradigm approaches refer to innovative instructional leadership practices. Theoretical elements of the MASS instrument items attempt to flesh out whether teachers feel such an environment exists in their school.
The purpose of this correlational study was to examine the degree to which teachers’ perceptions of Administrative Support could predict Follower Readiness. In the context of the present study, Administrative Support was a construct created by the researcher to reflect emergent themes from the literature related to school climate and teacher-principal relationships. Teachers’ self-reported Follower Readiness provided a means by to determine whether the construct of administrative support significantly impacts teacher Willingness and Ability to carry out their responsibilities. Also examined was whether new-paradigm leadership initiatives, as well as other demographic and school-related variables, significantly influence teacher perceptions of Administrative Support and self-reported Follower Readiness as operationalized in the researcher-developed MASS.

Participants were comprised of teachers from three middle schools from Northwest Ohio. The study examined participants’ perceptions of Administrative Support and Follower Readiness across seven subscales in survey form. Instrument items constituted subscales measuring perceptions of (a) Instructional Improvement, (b) Feedback, (c) Discourse, (d) Reflection and Growth, (e) Anxiety, (f) Willingness, and (g) Ability. Administrative Support mean scores, as well as other demographic and school-related information, were collected to determine which factors significantly predict teacher self-reported Follower Readiness which comprise the Willingness and Ability. Subscales assessing Follower Readiness were meant to ascertain the degree to which teachers felt they were willing and able to perform their professional duties. Overall Administrative Support and Overall Follower Readiness total sum scores were also used for statistical comparison.

The researcher examined which factors of Administrative Support best predicted Follower Readiness through forward multiple regression analysis. In addition, school group
demographic variables in all subscale scores were explored to detect if differences exist between schools relative to the variables of *Years of Teaching Experience*, *District* characteristics, and teacher perceptions of *Efforts to Build Teacher-Principal Relationships*. These variables were analyzed using a *t*-test of independent samples and ANOVA.

**Research Questions**

1. Do teachers’ perceptions of Administrative Support (*Instructional Improvement, Feedback, Discourse, Reflection and Growth*, and *Anxiety*) significantly predict Follower Readiness (*Willingness* and *Ability*)?

2. Do perceptions of Administrative Support and Follower Readiness significantly differ by demographic and school-related variables (*Efforts to Build Teacher-Principal Relationships, District*, and *Years of Experience*)?

**Theoretical Framework**

Innovative approaches to meet the demands of accountability and to improve teaching practices may inform research and practice in 21st century American public education. School climate, and ultimately student achievement, is affected by the teacher-principal relationship (Shouppe & Pate, 2010). The present study, MASS subscales, and individual items were created by the researcher to reflect the purported goals of new-paradigm building-level instructional leadership research in the form of teacher perceptions and as such frame the theoretical structure of the present study. Figure 1 presents the constructs of Administrative Support and Follower Readiness.

The constructs of *Instructional Improvement, Feedback, Discourse, Reflection and Growth*, and *Anxiety* (See Figure 1, A) are terms that emerge throughout the literature on instructional leadership, and were harnessed by the researcher as themes meant to capture the
essence of contemporary teacher-principal relationships. Each subscale is meant to diagnose areas of strength and weakness in the teacher-principal relationship.

The construct of Follower Readiness (see Figure 1, B) was examined as a subscale component of the MASS in order to determine which Administrative Support subscale categories most heavily influenced teaching practices. Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson (2001) define readiness in situational leadership theory as “the extent to which a follower demonstrates the ability and willingness to accomplish a specific task” (p. 175). The “task” in this context is the act of classroom teaching. Ability is defined as “…the knowledge, experience, and skill that an individual or group brings to a particular task or activity;” (p. 176) and willingness as “…the extent to which an individual or group has the confidence, commitment, and motivation to accomplish a specific task” (p.176). The degree to which teacher perceptions of Administrative Support predict Follower Readiness (see Figure 1, C) are meant to illuminate areas of instructional leadership where building-level principals are either being effective or ineffective in cultivating a quality teacher-principal relationship.

Figure 1. Teacher Perceptions of Administrative Support and Follower Readiness Framework
Significance of the Study

By using quantitative methods to measure the perceptions of Administrative Support and Follower Readiness among teachers, this study adds to a dearth in the existing literature by more effectively articulating ways in which the teacher-principal relationship impacts teacher willingness and ability. The findings of the present research in terms of Instructional Improvement, Feedback, Discourse, Reflection and Growth, and Anxiety will hopefully illuminate specific areas of administrator strength and weakness from the teachers’ perspective that can be targeted to improve the effectiveness of the instructional process.

The subscales of the MASS highlight key assertions from innovative, new-paradigm leadership initiatives (ex. walkthroughs, professional learning communities, etc.) in an effort to examine the degree to which building-level administrators’ actions facilitate positive Ability and Willingness of teachers to deliver more effective instruction. Rather than focusing on principals’ self-perceptions, teacher perceptions of administrative support were examined in this study. Choosing teacher perceptions was an attempt to understand the challenges facing teachers and principals from a different perspective. In a study of relationships relative to the authentic leadership of principals and teacher trust and engagement, Bird, Wang, Watson, and Murray (2009) state that principals’ self-report of authentic leadership is not significantly correlated to teacher reports. In other words, teacher perceptions of authentic leadership are not the same as the perceptions self-reported by principals. Reliability tests, such as the Cronbach alpha test in the Bird et al. (2009) study, show that teachers’ ratings of principals are more reliable than principals’ self-perception. Because teachers more directly affect student outcomes, the present study examines teacher perceptions rather than those of building administrators. Furthermore, Knoeppel and Rinehart (2008) add “research is needed on the effects of principal behaviors,
training, and characteristics on student achievement—namely, to improve student achievement” (p. 506). The results of the survey could be utilized in future research to compare and draw connections from teacher perceptions of Administrative Support to student achievement and provide strategies for improvement. Cranston (2011) also asserts that “little research examines the nature of the relationships that must exist in order to build and sustain professional learning communities and the role that principals play in developing these relationships” (p. 59).

A professional learning community can often emerge naturally when a cohesive group of individuals share similar interests and common goals. When fostered and facilitated by school leaders, they may present vast opportunities for building relationships.

Furthermore, the present study could expand our knowledge of the effectiveness of innovative, new-paradigm approaches such as walkthrough programs, and provide a pre-post formative assessment snapshot that can contribute to overall understanding of how teachers view their relationship with building-level administrators. As explained in the literature review, the MASS could be utilized as a formative assessment tool to assist principals to more effectively meeting the goals established in the Ohio Principal Evaluation System (OPES).

In addition to specific subscale-related significance, other statistical analysis may yield important results. For example, examining teacher perceptions of Administrative Support and Follower Readiness in schools that have Efforts to Build Teacher-Principal Relationships and those that do not, may provide valuable evidence that new-paradigm leadership initiatives such as walkthrough programs could be implemented on a broader scale to improve instruction. By assessing the power of initiatives meant to improve teacher perceptions of Administrative Support and ultimately Follower Readiness such as walkthrough programs, school leaders can decide whether it was useful in practice or not. This study will provide information to
administrators on issues that teachers perceive as affecting their willingness and ability to teach. Moreover, the results of this study might also inform teacher and administrator training institutions’ curricula. For example, if *Efforts to Build Teacher-Principal Relationships* implemented in schools show significantly positive perceptions of Administrative Support, then readers of the results of this study could be implementation on a broader scale.

**Definition of Terms**

*Administrative Support:* refers to the teacher-principal relationship in terms of informal and formal interactions pertaining to the areas of *Instructional Improvement, Feedback, Discourse, Reflection and Growth, and Anxiety.*

*Anxiety:* is defined as the uneasiness or stress associated by teachers with the teacher-principal relationship.

*Discourse:* refers to the lexical field used by teachers and administrators when discussing teaching and learning at the building level. For the purposes of this study, further nuanced meaning of *discourse* includes the quality of such discussions between teachers and administrators.

*Efforts to Improve Teacher-Principal Relationships:* refers to building-level engagement efforts such as walkthroughs and professional learning communities that have an impact on teacher-principal relationships outside of mere managerial interactions.

*Feedback:* represents the quality of communication between supervising administrators and faculty after formal and informal observation, as well as exchanges related to achievement data.

*Follower Readiness:* Hersey et al. (2001) define *follower readiness* in situational leadership theory as “the extent to which a follower demonstrates the ability and willingness to accomplish
a specific task” (pp. 175-176). For the purposes of this study, Follower Readiness specifically refers to teacher *Willingness* and *Ability* to carry out their instructional responsibilities.

**Instructional Improvement:** describes the quality of assistance offered by the school administration to teachers meant to improve classroom instruction.

**Learning Community:** a group of people who are bonded based on common factors who also share the same interests, and engage in knowledge gaining and growth activities to meet a common goal.

**New-Paradigm Instructional Leadership:** leadership that rejects traditional top-down managerial approaches and instead embraces a more collegial exchange between the principal and teacher; one that creates a common language of instruction, thereby engendering better instruction by teachers.

**Reflection and Growth:** represents the degree to which supervising administrators facilitate or hinder self-reflection and growth in teachers.

**Walkthroughs:** informal and formal classroom visits by school leaders for the purpose of evoking conversations leading to improved instruction.

**Delimitations and Limitations**

Creswell (2003) defines limitations as potential weaknesses of a study and delimitations serve to narrow the scope of the study. In this study, delimitations include that the researcher has chosen to limit the population to middle school teachers in Northwest Ohio due to participant group accessibility. Limitations include the limited size and relative homogeneity of the sample (i.e. three similar middle schools). The fact that the MASS is a newly developed instrument with limited evidence of reliability and validity, and the extent to which results can be generalized to
the population due to the nature of self-reporting perceptions are additional limiting factors in this study.

**Organization of the Remaining Chapters**

Chapter two outlines existing research on the topics of current trends in education reform, instructional leadership, Administrative Support (along with research pertaining to all seven subscales of the MASS instrument), and Follower Readiness. Chapter three outlines the methodology and research questions. Chapter four presents the descriptive statistics of the MASS as well as the inferential statistical analyses of subscale and overall MASS as they relate to themselves and demographic and school-related variables. Chapter five presents the discussion of the findings, implications for practitioners and future research, and the conclusion.
CHAPTER II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents a survey of contemporary challenges faced by educators, and then moves to exploring how instructional leadership and innovative strategies can improve school climate and overall educator effectiveness. Finally, each of the seven subscales of the Methner Administrative Support Survey (MASS) (Instructional Improvement, Feedback, Discourse, Reflection and Growth, Anxiety, Willingness, and Ability) are introduced and discussed in order to explain their function as emergent themes from the literature representative of Administrative Support and Follower Readiness.

Research suggests that one of the most significant factors in student academic success is the teacher-principal relationship (Downey, 2004; Glickman, et al., 2009; Hoy and Miskel, 2005; Protheroe, 2009; Ubben, et al., 2011). According to Edgerson and Kritsonis (2006), although teacher-principal relationships can vary among schools and even among teachers, they nonetheless affect student achievement. Cornelius and Cornelius (n.d.) define principals’ traditional responsibilities as hiring teachers, managing budgets, responding to community concerns, and setting the general tone in a school’s overall culture. In addition to these traditional roles, principals are now faced with increased emphasis on their role as instructional leaders (Hambright & Franco, 2008). The principal-teacher relationship is a critical component in instructional leadership and, consequently, factors heavily in efforts to improve student achievement (Shouppe & Pate, 2010).

In the middle school context, Wilcox and Angelis (2012) hold that educators in higher-performing schools identified respectful and trusting relationships as the major reason for success; where trust enabled collaborative development and enactment of a shared vision for student success. Further, Wilcox and Angelis (2012) add that teacher and administrator
relationships “…helped lay the foundation for collaboratively supported instruction and successful administrator and teacher leadership” (p. 43). The factors of “trust, respect for and from all, shared responsibility for performance, encouragement of initiative taking, and professional opportunities within and beyond the classroom” all were found as important features of the teacher-principal relationship (Wilcox & Angelis, 2012, p. 43).

The present study explores the relationship between teacher perceptions of Administrative Support (i.e. Instructional Improvement, Feedback, Discourse, Reflection and Growth, and Anxiety) and teacher self-reported Follower Readiness (Willingness and Ability). In an effort to better understand the challenges facing 21st century principals, studying teacher perceptions may contribute to understanding the relationships between them and principals. The purpose of this research is to explore the extent to which teacher perceptions of Administrative Support predict teachers’ self-reported Follower Readiness. Research suggests varying levels of employee follower readiness (low to high) are a result of the climate, motivation, willingness to take risks, and morale experienced by staff in the workplace (Evans & Human, 1993; Lerstrom, 2008; Willis & Varner, 2010). According to Willis and Varner (2010), administrative support is one of the ways in which principals can enhance school culture. Measuring the effect of Administrative Support on Follower Readiness is an attempt to better understand the teacher-principal relationship. Also explored is whether demographic and other school-related variables have a significant effect on Follower Readiness and perceptions of Administrative Support. The information presented in this chapter is relevant to both policymakers and practitioners as it attempts to synthesize and apply research.
The Contemporary Challenge of Accountability in Public Education

According to Grayling (2002), “Education, and especially ‘liberal education’ is what makes civil society possible. That means it has an importance even greater than its contribution to economic success, which, alas, is all that politicians seem to think it is for” (p. 157). The present study explores the teacher-principal relationship across three middle schools. Wilcox and Angelis (2012) state that “heightened accountability for all students to meet or exceed state expectations of performance—regardless of their ethnic, linguistic, or socioeconomic backgrounds—pose great challenges to middle level educators” (p. 46). Chapter two examines the roots of such reform, efforts proposed by researchers, and the implications of efforts to meet expectations in practice.

Decades of reform movements have witnessed the call for increased accountability in America’s schools. From the Soviet launch of Sputnik to No Child Left Behind (NCLB), schools have been subject to increased scrutiny and accountability (Tozer, Senese, & Violas, 2009). Schooling in America has long reflected the ideology and political economy of those influential in policy (Tozer et al., 2009). In 1957, the launch of Sputnik marked the beginning of a period of education reform that is still felt today (Tozer et al., 2009). The 1983 release of *A Nation at Risk* further highlighted the calls for increased accountability, noting that America was failing to adequately educate its children (Tozer et al., 2009). *A Nation at Risk* was used by then President Reagan as a launching point for sweeping “back to basics” education reform (Tozer et al., 2009). In 2001, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) expanded the federal government’s role in elementary and secondary education in an effort to diminish achievement gaps across the American school population through increased school accountability (Tozer et al., 2009).
With each effort to reform education have come additional demands on school employees. Effects of this can be seen in terms of increased scrutiny and calls for greater accountability and student achievement. Not all reform has been seen to broadly benefit public schools. Initiatives meant to demonstrate and reflect accountability like school choice, standardized testing, voucher programs, and other market-related reform efforts have been interpreted by some researchers as weakening public education by calling exorbitant attention to deficiencies and further spreading already thin resources (Apple, 2006; Ravitch, 2010; Rose, 2009; Zhao 2009). In the context of this research, reform efforts have increased the emphasis on instructional leadership as a component of building-level administrators’ responsibility (Hambright & Franco, 2008). Additionally, principals are charged with prohibiting school violence, meeting the needs of all students, and staying current with technology (Cornelius & Cornelius, n.d.). The combination of these responsibilities undoubtedly influence the teacher-principal relationship, as they are inextricably tied to what goes on in the classroom.

Williams (2009) states that “one of the most pressing problems with urban schools in America is stimulating students to achieve academic excellence” (p. 16). The nature of the teacher-principal relationship has a direct impact on student achievement (Lumpkin, 2010). This research asserts, then, that because student achievement is linked to teacher-principal relationships, these relationships are also a pressing problem. According to Mullen and Hutinger (2008), “principals are in the unique position to create conditions that foster teacher development and student learning” (p. 283). The demands on the teacher-principal relationship are complicated, as traditional roles are challenged to meet the demands of NCLB (Daly & Chrispeels, 2008). Creating a positive relationship with teachers is a critical task for the principal. Mullen and Hutinger (2008) suggest “they [principals] can also foster ways for faculty
to build positive synergy, enabling individuals to satisfy both individual and shared goals” (p. 281). A positive synergy creates a safe atmosphere where teachers are more likely to expose their weaknesses, experiment with new instructional techniques, and challenge their philosophical beliefs (Mullen & Hutinger, 2008). Moreover, school leadership is critical in effective data-driven problem solving as principals set the tone and expectations among the staff (Anderson, Leithwood, & Strauss, 2010). In a study of Australian teachers, Dinham (2007) found that teacher and student success was “attributable in large part to the leadership and assistance of their colleagues in faculties and teaching teams” (p. 266). As principals are responsible in large part for facilitating group synergy, it is easy to see the importance of the teacher-principal relationship. According to Dinham (2007), “no leader can accomplish change and renewal on his or her own and thus the importance of relationships, both personal and professional, cannot be overstated” (p. 273).

Further complicating compliance with reform efforts like NCLB are the current economic challenges facing schools. Many public schools have experienced stagnant or reduced funding (Picus & Odden, 2011). Despite historical increases in overall funding for public education in America (Guthrie & Peng, 2010), research suggests that schools are feeling the impact of the current American economic crisis (Donlevy, 2010; Picus & Odden, 2011; Roza, 2009). Finding alternate revenue sources, raising taxes, or tapping reserves are avenues by which schools can continue to offer adequate programming in the face of increased emphasis and accountability regarding student performance (Donlevy, 2010; Picus & Odden, 2011). Unfortunately, these are not often realistic alternatives.

As educational leaders ponder ways to continue to provide a quality education while being good stewards of public monies, they will be forced to question long-held practices and be
open to new approaches to public education (Daly & Chrispeels, 2008). According to Daly and Chrispeels (2008), “we have a continuing moral and ethical imperative to ensure the educational civil rights of a nation by renewing public education; our children deserve no less” (p. 57). Mulford (2006) adds that “society’s most important investment is increasingly seen to be in the education of its people—we suffer in the absence of good education: we prosper in its presence” (p. 48). So, the obligation of our nation’s schools to provide adequate education is easily observed as a bellwether for our nation’s prosperity. K-12 public education has long served as the institution preparing students for the workforce or higher education institutions (Tozer et al., 2009; Zhao, 2009). Finding ways to meet the obligations of American public education in the midst of calls for accountability and funding crises poses a significant challenge.

Many political factions have asserted ways to improve the system, but since A Nation at Risk was released, and later with NCLB, an agenda of increased expectations for curricula and teachers, standardization, and intense focus on core subjects, and school choice has been put into place (Apple, 2006). Apple (2006) asserts that consumer-related logic creates a situation where “education is seen as simply one more product like bread, cars, and television. By turning it over to the market through voucher and choice plans, education will be largely self-regulating” (p. 32). The market competition concept purports that with competition and free enterprise will come innovation and improved outcomes for lower cost. This market concept has dominated educational discourse for the last 30 years, and has often found bi-partisan support (Ravitch, 2010). Principals and teachers bear the brunt of carrying out reform efforts as they directly relay such efforts to students. The contemporary rhetoric and policy that inundates our public education system thus has a direct impact on the role and morale of our principals and teachers. According to Knoeppel and Rinehart (2008),
States have historically used accountability systems as a way to monitor and regulate education. These accountability systems evolve from state-defined requirements for inputs, input usage, and minimum competency requirements to the standards-based movement, in which states established challenging content and performance standards for all students. (p. 503)

Accountability systems have now permeated all levels of education, from curricula to teacher and administrator performance. Timperley (2005) asserts that “it would be reasonable to conclude from recent research on leadership that the solution to our entrenched education problems, particularly that of persistent underachievement, lies with leadership that is focused on promoting effective teaching and learning” (p. 145).

Understanding extant student needs may be critical to assigning value to specific change efforts, and ultimately student success. The degree to which student needs enter the discourse on education reform has a direct impact on student learning. At the district level, the leader must assess the needs of her district, then communicate and create buy-in among stakeholders. The leader must articulate this need in a straight-forward, easy to understand manner. Community members must understand what motivates children to become productive adults. Schools are among the institutions charged with the task of effectively communicating the realities of contemporary American society to the broad public.

Schools must pay specific attention to instruction, as their overall structure is not enough to change achievement (Grubb, 2009). Not only must we change and improve lesson delivery, but what we teach must also be addressed. Reflecting the realities of globalization, Zhao (2009) reflects that “what used to be required of a small group of individuals—diplomats, translators, cross-cultural communication consultants, or international tour guides—has become necessary
for all professions” (p. 112). Schools are thus charged with a responsibility to adapt to the changing needs of the job market. Knoeppel and Rinehart (2008) add that “standards-based education reform empowers schools and school districts to design appropriate instructional practices and strategies that meet the diverse needs of learners in myriad content areas, in return for accountability as measured by student performance” (p. 503). The teacher-principal relationship is a critical component of curriculum development and implementation, and consequently of carrying out the directives of state and federal mandates.

As an integral part of perpetuating our economy, a case can be made that public education touches nearly every demographic—from newborns to the elderly—and every element of our society from drug use to national defense. Public education represents a tremendous allocation in local, state, and federal budgets (Hartman, 2003). Economic challenges, coupled with a new set of academic expectations set forth by policy makers, also affect principal-teacher relationships. Ware and Kitsantas (2011) contend that,

In addition to these substantial financial concerns, high rates of teacher turnover are purportedly diminishing the quality of teaching and the possibilities of closing the achievement gap in our nation’s schools. Recent investigations have sought to understand the reasons why as many as 50% of teachers are leaving the field within their first 5 years of teaching. (p. 183)

Educators are on the frontlines and must give voice to and articulate the new challenges facing our children. Zhao (2009) suggests that, “we must think globally in terms of what knowledge and skills our children will need so that they can exercise their inalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness in the globalized world” (p. 113). In addition to changing what we teach, Zhao (2009) warns of our recent modifications to what we teach
(primarily reform efforts’ trend toward narrowly focused high-stakes standardized testing) as being potentially detrimental to preparing students to meet the needs of our 21st century society. Supovitz (2009) asserts that reform movements in the 1980s and 1990s set up the current system of measuring outcomes rather than inputs in education, and thereby shifting emphasis to accountability. Supovitz (2009) further explains that although high stakes testing and accountability fosters curricular alignment and provides data, it is often superficial. Rather than to focus on creative problem solving, we are pushing student achievement toward simply performing on tests. Zhao (2009) adds, “Education that is oriented solely to preparing students to achieve high scores on tests can be harmful to both individuals and the nation it is supposed to serve” (p. 85).

Despite this, pushes toward high-stakes assessment continue to dominate the discourse of education reform. According to Mora (2011), federal mandates from NCLB and more recently Race to the Top have created a culture of testing in schools that has negative implications on instructional activities and student engagement, as more time is devoted to preparation and administration of standardized tests. Mora (2011) suggests that “the very high-stakes exams that proponents suggest will prepare students for college may, ironically enough, result in situated boredom within classrooms, leading fewer students to consider further education” (p. 6). The burden of mitigating such potential issues falls on the shoulders of teachers and principals.

Similarly, in contradiction to information reform efforts like NCLB and A Nation at Risk have used to criticize shortcomings of American public education, Zhao (2009) points out that the very system that stresses accountability and assessment based on standardized, narrowly focused tests that we are rushing to embrace is one that Chinese education officials are eager to exchange for the traditional American education system. He argues that a narrowly focused
system stifles creativity and prepares students to take standardized tests, not to be global citizens. The choice, according to Zhao (2009) is, “…of what we want: a diversity of talents, of individuals who are passionate, curious, self-confident, and risk taking; or a nation of excellent test takers, outstanding performers on math and reading tests” (p. 59). The effects of current reform efforts are not only felt by students, but by teachers as well. Au (2011) asserts that high-stakes testing and standardization of current reform is reminiscent of the early 1900s and emphasis on scientific management with the pre-packaged corporate curricula that he argues both “disempowers and deskills teachers” as they increasingly teach to the test (p. 30).

The foundation of our public education system is to provide all citizens with access to a quality education. If we wish in earnest to offer the freedom of a quality education to all citizens, then we must face the realities of contemporary reform. Recent reform efforts calling for accountability and standardized tests have changed the nature of teaching in America. As educators spend more time administering assessments and reporting data, the time spent actually teaching may be diminishing (Au, 2011). In an effort to leave no child behind, it is possible that we are in fact shifting toward a system that does just the opposite? The constant barrage of testing potentially strips teachers’ ability to provide anything more than the “banking concept” of education described by Paulo Freire. According to Freire (1970/1993),

…the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits. They do, it is true, have the opportunity to become collectors or cataloguers of the things they store. But in the last analysis, it is the people themselves who are filed away through the lack of creativity, transformation, and knowledge in this (at best) misguided system. (p. 72)
What reformers may fail to realize is that the creativity increasingly stifled in the general population with current reform efforts may have crippling effects on the future productivity of our country (Zhao, 2009). Clearly, all reform is meant to improve student achievement, regardless of method. Principals and teachers are key players in education, as they have a direct impact on students. The nature of the teacher-principal relationship is thus crucial in carrying out reform requirements. Principals, perhaps now more than ever before, are in critical leadership positions with critical responsibilities.

**The Principal as Instructional Leader**

Shouppe and Pate (2010) assert that “principal leadership may be the most important factor in sustainable education reform” (p. 94). Reform efforts in education are meant to improve student outcomes, and the responsibility for leadership falls on school administrators. According to Hambright and Franco (2008), “…the increased focus on accountability has added instructional leadership to the role of the principal without removing any of the principal’s historical roles such as business manager and building management” (p. 271). Though it is arguably always a component of a principal’s responsibility, instructional leadership has moved to the fore in the contemporary era of accountability and education reform. Angelle (2007) contents that,

Principals can offer support for teacher leadership both overtly and covertly. Through empowering teachers, including them in decision making, recognizing their efforts, relinquishing control, sharing responsibility for failure, and giving credit for success, principals can send the message to the school community that teacher leadership is important and accepted in the school culture. (p. 58)
The resultant complexity of increased emphasis on instructional leadership may require principals to search for new approaches such as shared leadership (Hambright & Franco, 2008). Improving, teacher-principal relationships, school climate, and creating learning communities are examples of ways in which principals can implement instructional leadership as they generate avenues to help teachers.

Middle schools pose their own unique challenges to building positive climate and culture. Wilcox & Angelis (2012) suggest high performing middle schools have engendered, …a culture that supports a shared vision of high achievement, a climate of respect and trust that enacts the school and district vision, structures and expectations that reinforce collaboratively supported instruction and a coherent program, and encouragement of teacher initiative taking and leadership. (p. 47)

Walkthrough programs and learning communities (relatively new approaches to improving instruction and the teacher-principal relationship) suggest ways to address issues of anxiety, feedback quality, discourse, instructional improvement, reflection and growth, and follower readiness—all components of the organizational culture of a typical school (Banks & Burbank, 2008; Brundage, 1996; Downey, 2004; Feeney, 2007; Hersey et al., 2001; Range et al., 2011; Okeafor & Poole, 1992; Wright & Ballestro, 2011; Zepeda & Kruskamp, 2007). Though there is much research published on these topics, few have synthesized them into an approach that gauges their effect on teacher Follower Readiness. Downey (2004) asserts that educators should possess the following qualities (note that “teacher” could be replaced with any educational position):

1. Reflective, self-directed, self-analytical, interdependent teachers who examine their own practices (even those who initially are at the dependent level);
2. Teachers who are continually willing to improve their teaching practices;

3. Teachers who are committed to teaching the district curriculum student learning and working for ever higher student achievement. (p. 8)

Because principals have been given more responsibility, the teacher-principal relationship has become more important. Principals must also make efficient use of their time in light of the increased demands brought about by contemporary education reform. Communication with teachers must effectively transmit the edicts of education reform mandates. Shouppe and Pate (2010) state that “leadership focused on the development of teachers, professional community and school climate could lead to improved student academic performance” (p. 94). Lumpkin (2010) echoes a similar sentiment stating, “the person most critical to the success of teachers is the building principal. The person most critical to student learning is the teacher” (p. 72). The principal thus serves in an enormously important role in schools as they are critically linked to teachers. According to Mulford (2006), transformational school principals focus on:

- Individual Support. Providing moral support, showing appreciation for the work of individual staff and taking account of their opinions.

- Culture. Promoting an atmosphere of caring and trust among staff, setting the tone for respectful interaction with students, and demonstrating a willingness to change practices in the light of new understandings.

- Structure. Establishing a school structure that promotes participative decision making, supporting delegation and distributed leadership, and encouraging teaching decision-making autonomy.
• Vision and Goals. Working toward whole-staff consensus on school priorities and communicating these to students and staff to establish a strong sense of overall purpose.

• Performance Expectation. Having high expectations for students and for teacher to be effective and innovative.

• Intellectual stimulation. Encouraging staff to reflect on what they are trying to achieve with students and how they are doing it; facilitates opportunities for staff to learn from each other and models continual learning in his or her own practice. (p. 51)

As previously stated, the teacher-principal relationship in education is an essential element of student success (Ubben et al., 2011). Finding a single definition for leadership effectiveness in this context, however, is not easily achieved nor is it necessarily the end-goal. Teacher-principal relationships, though an important contributor to student success, do not have a singular definition. Gordon and Patterson (2006) examined the characteristics of principal succession (i.e. replacement of an acting principal) in schools implementing a comprehensive reform effort meant to improve student achievement in North Carolina. A qualitative, grounded-theory methodology was used to develop profiles that represent the various leadership types present in the participating school district principals. The qualities that made each type of principal either successful or unsuccessful are explained in terms of community context.

The conceptual framework of the Gordon and Patterson (2006) study began by first identifying four common misplaced assertions in school leadership research: 1) school leadership falls entirely on the principal; 2) effectiveness is based solely on student achievement; 3) narrowness of methodological approaches; and 4) lack of sufficient empirical work. The
researchers argue that leadership is “relational, negotiated, and context specific” (p. 206). Leadership, therefore, changes according the demands of each situation. Gordon and Patterson (2006) critique current leadership theory in education as being too normative in nature, focused on leadership residing in a sole individual, and evolutionary in character. Essentially, the researchers make a case that conventional models of leadership all have fatal flaws in that they do not consider the individual nature of each leader’s specific context. Teacher-principal relationships are thus situational rather than easily predictable.

Participants used in the Gordon and Patterson (2006) study were part of a much larger, comprehensive, long-term evaluative study of the implementation of an A+ program across 27 schools. The A+ program focused on the arts as a means to improve student achievement and was implemented across the curriculum in participating schools. Iterative team data analysis of the larger survey yielded new themes for inquiry. More specifically, 12 A+ schools that experienced principal succession were selected for this particular research endeavor. Schools experiencing principal succession were chosen because their situation afforded the researchers a unique opportunity to observe the continued success or failure of the A+ initiative. Thus, the researchers had a controlled environment in which to identify leadership types of former and new principals, and to examine the effect the leadership types had on the school.

Because the researchers were involved in a long-term study, they had access to candid reaction to teachers before, during, and after principal succession. Eighty percent of the teachers in the 12 schools were interviewed. Select teachers also served as “key informants” (Gordon & Patterson, 2006, p. 212). Principals were also interviewed on the topics of succession and the A+ program implementation.
According to Gordon and Patterson (2006), an inductive approach to data analysis consistent with grounded theory was used in the study. Leadership types were built by identifying similar and different themes across all 12 participating schools. Discussion and analysis were used to further refine the leadership categories; a process that took place over several months. Finally, a matrix displaying the types of leaders at each school was developed, providing an array of leadership types.

Results of the study were presented in the form of five mini case studies highlighting each of the five leadership types that emerged from the 12 participating districts. The leadership types are 1) Overt Top-down leadership, where leaders do not hide that they make the important decisions; 2) Covert Top-down leadership, where leaders create governance structures that give the appearance of involving others in decision-making but still make most decisions alone; 3) Vanguard leadership, where the principal and another staff member championing the A+ initiative make decisions; 4) Network leadership, where decision-making is evenly spread across the staff; and 5) Network Wannabe leadership, where leaders attempt to establish Network leadership but leadership is not truly shared. Excerpts from interviews with teachers and principals illustrate examples of each type of leadership. The success or failure of each principal (old and new) was then discussed to highlight ways in which context affects principal effectiveness. Context in these cases included the individuality of each community, the staffs’ penchants, and the leadership type of each principal. This research points out the difficulty of creating a broad definition of successful or unsuccessful teacher-principal relationships, and calls attention to the need to explore the relationship between an individual principal and his or her staff. If instructional leadership is to be effective, the principal must demonstrate a leadership
style that is accepted by the staff. If this is not the case, then either the leader must adapt or be replaced by a leader who can effectively work with a given staff.

Mullican and Ainsworth (2001) assert that principals indicate instructional leadership, though a desirable role, as not being fulfilled in practice. They also add that the definition of the principal as instructional leader is difficult to pin down. According to Ubben et al. (2011), instructional leadership that was once driven by an effective schools concept where principals were the summit of leadership has now evolved into an environment where the principal is a “facilitator of the instructional process” (p. 29). Thus principals are facilitators of the instructional process. Principals must find ways to help teachers be better instructors (i.e. be instructional leaders). Grubb (2009) asserts that students are more engaged and motivated when they have some autonomy, are in student-centered classrooms, have close adult supervision, learn in well-structured and challenging curricula that emphasize achievement, have multiple ways to display competence, and when programs show a clear link between schooling and future activities. The challenge lies in how principals are able to carry out their roles as instructional leaders under the auspices of contemporary calls for data-driven accountability.

Despite the new conceptual definitions of instructional leadership, teachers can at times feel isolated, or even intimidated by administrative support. Principals, in turn, have a simultaneous obligation to their traditional interactions with staff and students and to the new tasks of data-analysis, testing, and reporting—the latter is meant to assist the principal’s facilitation of the instructional process through better understanding of achievement. This sea-change in school reform has added a new dimension to instructional leadership. Ubben et al. (2011) state that “effective instructional leadership requires a complex set of relationships between principals and their beliefs and the surrounding environment of the school” (p. 31). If
principals are to handle all these responsibilities, new and old, the question becomes: *How can they possibly be able to fit it all in?*

Closely related to Ubben et al. (2011), Glickman et al. (2009) assert that a paradigm shift from traditional instructional supervision toward a more collegial form is essential to achieving success in today’s schools. Glickman et al. (2009) state that supervision should include the following assumptions:

1. A collegial rather than a hierarchical relationship between teachers and formally designated supervisors.
2. Supervision as the province of teachers as well as formally designated supervisors.
3. A focus on teacher growth rather than teacher compliance.
4. Facilitation of teachers collaborating with each other in instructional improvement efforts.
5. Teacher involvement in ongoing reflective inquiry (Gordon, 1997, p. 116 as cited in Glickman, et al., 2009, p. 6)

Principals alone contribute to up to 25% of student achievement because of actions they take to create conditions that support student learning (i.e. hiring, retention and dismissal of teachers, professional development, and evaluation (Marzano, Waters, and McNulty, 2005). This high percentage of contribution creates a concrete argument for assuring the quality of our nation’s principals. So integral is the principal as a leader that Whitaker (2003) adds, “when the principal sneezes, the whole school catches a cold. This is neither good nor bad, it is just the truth” (p. 30). Because principals play such a critical role in student success, a uniform system of principal evaluation can inform principal professional development, administrator preparatory institutions, and ultimately lead to better student achievement. Babo and Ramaswami (2011)
contend that it is surprising that despite much agreement on which standards support effective principals, in most cases principal evaluation varies from district to district based on individual personalities of principals and superintendents. Traditionally, local and state governments have largely controlled public education. However, with the passage of the *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2002, the federal government has imposed an increasing interest in public schools (Kraft & Furlong, 2010). Effective principals utilize multiple methods to ensure a positive school climate. According to research, establishing and maintaining positive climate, morale, learning communities, and trust in a school building is an essential task for principals (Glickman et al., 2009; Marzano et al., 2005; Shouppe & Pate, 2010; Ubben et al., 2011; Whitaker, 2003).

**Climate, Morale, and Learning Communities.**

According to Shouppe and Pate (2010) “studies on school climate showed a direct relationship between high student achievement and schools which create a positive learning environment...collaboration and shared governance regarding instructional goals can lead to a positive school climate that fosters student achievement” (p. 89). Similarly, Watkins (2005) contends that “without a strong learning community that supports new teachers, the principal faces attrition rates that jeopardize student achievement and curriculum continuity” (p. 83). In a study of achievement scores in relation to teacher perceptions of principal leadership, Williams (2009) found that though principals’ instructional leadership skills were not directly linked to student achievement, they were strongly related to school climate. Although there is some discrepancy in the literature on this topic, the principal is the captain of a “ship” full of teachers on the sea of education; charged with establishing the climate and maintaining staff morale. Angelle (2007) adds “principals cannot really give empowerment to teachers. Principals can only create the environments and opportunities that lead to and support empowerment” (p. 58).
Learning communities are a way for building leaders to engage teachers in dialogue that supports a positive school climate. Ubben et al. (2011) define a learning community as an organization that is “…concerned with growth and continuous self-renewal of both individuals and organizations. The leaders are, therefore, responsible for building organizations where people are continually expanding their capabilities to shape their future—leaders are responsible for learning” (p. 25). In a survey of principals, Twigg (2008) found that “by showing tangible support mechanisms and generating a sense of belonging to the school or district they [people in positions of power in administration] can develop a culture of citizenship behaviors” (p. 272). Twigg (2008) also adds “administrators may not have to develop strong transformational leadership style in principals if they can enhance the teachers’ perception of support and increase their self-esteem” (p. 273). Climate encompasses attitudes of staff members resulting from working conditions overseen by building administration and ultimately defines the “culture” of a school. Angelle (2007) contends that “Collaboration, shared decision making, reflective practice, quality professional development, and shared goals are all a part of an organizational culture that promotes the high expectation and school-wide learning necessary for successful teacher leadership” (p. 59).

According to Greenlee and Brown (2009) “Working conditions and administrator support are among the top reasons why teachers leave…the principal is the key to influencing working conditions by improving the school culture” (p. 98). “School culture” in this case refers to the overall climate of a school building that affects teacher morale and ultimately student learning. The principal has a direct impact on teacher morale. Willis and Varner (2010) attest that “although teacher morale may be defined in multiple ways, most definitions include two themes: teachers have personal needs and the perceived realization of these needs within the organization
often impacts their state of mind and performance” (p. 1). If the principal plays a key role in influencing the working conditions (and, consequently, teacher Follower Readiness) of a school, then relationships with teachers are critical. Teachers’ direct contact with students further deepens the importance of quality teacher-principal relationships.

The concept of the learning community is another way to look at morale and climate within a school building. Learning communities further provide opportunities for teacher-principal relationship building. As reported by Lumpkin (2010),

Learning communities of teachers and principals can collaborate in improving student achievement and the principal serves as the facilitative leader in learning communities in transforming the curricula and assessments in schools. Possible learning benefits of learning communities could include the following:

a. Develop and nurture a school culture valuing collaboration and shared lesson plans, instructional strategies, and assessments.

b. Provide compensated time weekly and during the summer to facilitate teacher-to-teacher interactions and professional growth.

c. Recognize and celebrate collaborative efforts to enhance student learning.

d. Should any teachers and principals lack the knowledge, skills, and abilities to function effectively in professional learning communities, additional steps for principals who can help them further develop their competence in instructional content, teaching strategies, and assessments.

e. Give incentives to teachers and principals to increase their participation in professional development sessions or take advanced coursework specifically related to instruction.
f. Improve the quality of professional development at the school and district levels to help teachers and principals enhance their knowledge, skills and abilities associated with increasing learning. (p. 74)

Climate, morale, support, and learning communities are all under the influence of the building level leader. On a more personal level is trust between principals and teachers.

**Trust.**

The fundamental ingredient in any relationship is trust, and as such figures directly into the teacher-principal relationship and productivity (Cosner, 2010). According to Wang and Bird (2011) “trust is a critical component of school improvement and effectiveness…Scholars in the past paid attention to trust as an important factor that influences employees’ well-being, retention, and the success of the institution” (p. 126). Though the value of trust is apparent, it should be noted that current trends in education reform such as the accountability movement might negatively impact trust between teachers and principals. The nature of open analysis of student data is an example of how current trends in education can erode trust (Timperley, 2005).

In a workshop survey, Yager, Pedersen, Yager, and Noppe (2011-2012) found that “a prominent barrier described by the teachers is the lack of trust amongst the entire staff and administration. This lack of trust creates suspicion of integrity, agendas, and capabilities and becomes very difficult to communicate effectively” (p. 17).

Principals are charged with building trust at the building level. Their job is not made easier by current trends in education reform. Cranston (2011) asserts that

…relational trust requires establishing group norms around risk-taking and change orientation in order to foster a safe, comfortable climate for professional growth;
relational trust supports effective collaboration; the principal is central in establishing a climate of trust; and the faculty requisite trust of the principal is paramount. (p. 64)

According to Cosner (2010), “teachers regard principals as being less trustworthy when they engage teachers in bureaucratic and rule-bound ways” (p. 126). With increased attention to test-scores, it is not difficult to imagine a time when principals are more likely to engage teachers “in bureaucratic and rule-bound ways” (Au, 2011; Mora, 2011; Supovitz, 2009). This is ironic because research on instructional leadership theory does not appear to suggest leading in more bureaucratic and rule-bound ways with regard to the teacher-principal relationship. Goldring, Xiu, Murphy, Porter, Elliott, and Carson (2009) indicate “the stakes for effective school leaders are high in today’s climate of system-wide accountability where American public schools are subgroups of an increasingly diverse student population” (p. 20). It seems that the effects of system-wide accountability may be working against the goals of American education.

Closely examining the ways an individual principal interacts with teachers may be a powerful tool in getting to the root problems in contemporary American education, such as student achievement, teacher attrition and retention, principal efficacy, and resource challenges (Knoeppel & Reinhart, 2008; Supovitz, 2009; Ware & Kitsantas, 2011; Watkins, 2005). New approaches such as walkthrough programs and standardized principal evaluation systems may be helpful in fostering better teacher-principal relationships and ultimately better student achievement (Downey, 2004; Goldring et al., 2009).

**Walkthrough Programs.**

As we move from more broad theories of education, leadership, and organizational theory to more specific, grounded practitioner experience, the similarities are apparent. The purpose of this study is to evaluate how perceptions of administrative support predict follower readiness
within the school setting. Though informed by more broad research, it specifically focuses on the teacher-teacher relationship. One of the new approaches to instructional improvement are walkthrough programs. For example, the Downey Three-Minute Walkthrough Program is unique from traditional, formal forms of administrative observation and feedback in that it a) provides a “short, focused, yet informal observation”; b) is a “possible area for reflection”; c) has a “curriculum as well as instructional focus”; d) “follow-up occurs only on occasion and not after every visit”; e) is “informal and collaborative” (Downey, 2004, pp. 2-4). By frequently visiting classrooms informally, principals can develop a new type of comfort and dialogue with teachers. Ensuing conversation and reflective questions help not only the teacher to grow, but also help the principal to better understand the intricacies of her curriculum. Rossi (2007) reports positive outcomes after walkthrough implementation such as:

1. Teacher sharing of best practices;
2. Increased principal awareness of what is happening in classrooms;
3. Increase in teacher time on task;
4. Better principal understanding of curriculum gaps and inconsistencies;
5. Better principal understanding of professional development needs;
6. Improvement in the quality of student work;
7. Improved quality of conversations about instruction; and
8. Development of a common language around instruction. (p. 32)

In a survey of Wyoming principals, Range, Scherz, Holt, and Young (2011) found that 83.3% of survey participants used classroom walkthroughs, and felt they provided opportunities to get a snapshot of teaching and to provide feedback and engage teachers in discussions. Thanks to their ability to provide opportunity for teacher-principal discussion, formative
assessment tools like the walkthrough may be influential in new approaches to teacher accountability that focus on instructional improvement. In Ohio, teachers and principals will soon be evaluated in a standard way across the state (Ohio Department of Education, 2012).

**The Ohio Principal Evaluation System.**

As previously explored, contemporary reform initiatives for public schools have placed an emphasis on data-driven decision making and accountability. With the reform expectations come calls for standardized methods of collecting data not only on student achievement, but also on teacher and principal effectiveness. An example of the new approaches to accountability is the Ohio Principal Evaluation System. According to Goldring et al. (2009) “ideally, a principal assessment should be easy to administer, capture the essence of the role of a school principal, and provide valid and reliable data for purposes such as professional development and performance evaluation” (p. 19). The Ohio Principal Evaluation System (OPES) proposes a framework to appropriately assess the effectiveness of principals without stripping power entirely away from local districts (Ohio Department of Education, 2012). Like any reform movement that is proposed at the state or federal level, a vetting process is observed to ensure that the process represents good stewardship of public monies. If the OPES is to meet the standards of policy development, implementation, and evaluation, then it must submit to the democratic process. According to Ravitch (2010) “those who make policy are most successful when they must advance their ideas through a gauntlet of checks and balances, explaining their plans, submitting them to a process of public review, and attempting to persuade others…that’s democracy” (p. 11). Thus a state-wide, uniformly implemented system such as the OPES, derived from standards for effective principals and submitted to the democratic vetting process can potentially help ensure a higher level of principal quality.
The OPES proposes a research-based model to evaluate principals that takes into account four broad components based on the Ohio Standards for Principals and Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards (ISLLC): 1) professional goal setting; 2) formative assessment of principals’ performance; 3) communication and professionalism; and 4) summative evaluation (Ohio Department of Education, 2012). Principals’ performance will be rated according to a rubric as ineffective, proficient, accomplished, or distinguished. The evaluator, typically the superintendent, will meet with the principal several times throughout the evaluative period, as well as conduct observations and other types of performance review at her discretion. Half of the OPES rating for principals consists of the first three components (professional goal setting, formative assessment, and communication and professionalism). The remaining 50% is derived from “measures of student academic growth—per legislation”. Principals and evaluators are expected to meet to set and review goals; reflecting on data, progress, and needs throughout the performance period. Evaluators will determine the principal performance rating at the end of the performance period (Ohio Department of Education, 2012). Test scores, graduation rates, post-graduation success, and principal and teacher retention are all potential ways to judge the effectiveness of a school; especially in areas for which there are longitudinal data available. The OPES attempts to establish a means for determining the effectiveness of principals.

As the demands on public schools increase, approaches such as the OPES and new-paradigm instructional leadership methods such as walkthrough programs, fostering positive building climate and morale, development of trust, and learning communities may be adopted to not only equip schools to survive public scrutiny, but also to provide students with the best education possible, the central goal of public education (Cranston, 2011; Downey, 2004; Goldring et al., 2009; Knoeppel & Reinhart, 2008; Lumpkin, 2010; Supovitz, 2009; Ware &
Kitsantas, 2011; Watkins, 2005). Research on the topic of leadership assessment tools may assist policymakers and practitioners in understanding how the new paradigm of instructional leadership can be achieved.

**Administrative Support**

The challenges of meeting 21st century goals in education require new approaches in instructional leadership. The emergent themes of Administrative Support (*Instructional Improvement, Feedback, Discourse, Reflection and Growth, Anxiety*) and Follower Readiness (*Ability and Willingness*) target individual areas in contemporary instructional leadership and are inspired by new-paradigm instructional leadership approaches. The following sub-sections highlight literature related to Administrative Support and Follower Readiness.

**Instructional Improvement.**

According to Eady and Zepeda (2007), supervision of teachers should assist not only in improved instructional efficacy, but also in professional growth. Eady and Zepeda (2007) further note that “supervision that is formative in nature provides a basis for teachers to improve instruction” (p. 6). The principal’s role in instructional improvement is critical and at times difficult in the era of accountability, as principals must not only serve as instructional leaders, but in many other capacities (Hambright & Franco, 2008). The nature of the teacher-principal relationship may be further hampered by institutional rigidity. Range et al. (2011) surveyed principals in the state of Wyoming on supervision and evaluation and found that elementary and secondary principals responded positively to their supervisory practices, but found statistically significant differences in their use of evaluative practices, with elementary principals showing more use than their secondary counterparts. In addition, principals indicated frustration in the
supervision and evaluation process citing lack of time to supervise, frustrations with the district evaluation instrument itself, and teachers’ willingness to change (Range et al., 2011).

How the principal or other school leader interacts with teachers must vary between teachers of different experience and mastery levels. In a qualitative study of 16 veteran teachers with a minimum of 15 years of experience, Brundage (1996) points out consensus among survey participants that veteran teachers may have a larger knowledge base than those who supervise them. These teachers may need only “encouragement and reassurance from supervisors that their experiential knowledge is congruent with educational theory” (Brundage, 1996, p. 90). On the other hand, the increase in focus on the standards-based approach brought about by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 suggests that novice educators such as student teachers may need a different type of instructional support with more individualized feedback (Bates & Burbank, 2008). In theory, the elements of the principal-teacher relationship and the principal as instructional leader all outline the new-paradigm approaches necessary to provide such support.

Such literature is pertinent to the discussion because it establishes that principals must be nimble when determining approaches to specific teachers regarding instructional improvement (Bates & Burbank, 2008; Brundage, 1996; Downey, 2004; Range et al, 2011). Thus, there is not necessarily a “one size fits all” method for leadership, but instead principals must individualize leadership to the nuanced staff needs—a sort of differentiated instruction concept adapted to the teacher-principal relationship. In addition to direct principal-teacher interaction, principals can also leverage other staff, such as department chairs, to assist in instructional improvement. In a case study of perspectives, Zepeda and Kruskamp (2007) found that department chairs defined instructional leadership as intuitive and reflective of differentiated instruction, citing concepts
such as trust-building, instructional observation, feedback, and engagement in conversation regarding teaching and learning; all indicative of supervisory best practice.

Problems arose, however, when department chairs took on a supervisory role. Participants found the department chair as instructional leader to be a position somewhere between teachers and administrators; where a certain role conflict and ambiguity became evident. Time and lack of emphasis also inhibited effectiveness of the department chair as instructional leader (Zepeda & Kruskamp, 2007). In this case, principals could do more to facilitate and legitimize department chairs’ roles as instructional leaders by being more supportive and understanding of the nature of peer supervision and shared leadership. Because principals are charged with much responsibility, leveraging the capacities of department chairs could improve a principal’s ability to effectuate instructional improvement.

According to Okeafor and Poole (1992), supervision in schools “is conducted to improve the instructional program and the learning experiences of students” but that administrators often “seem less committed to improvement than to maintaining the status quo” (p. 372). In a qualitative study of 15 teachers in both public and nonpublic schools meant to explore teachers’ characterizations of administrator behavior, relationships, and respect, Okeafor and Poole (1992) found four well-defined patterns of the relationships and respect level between administrators and teachers: a) backstage supervisors, where formal observations were at a minimum and high-quality relationships displaying high levels of respect were prevalent; b) surly supervisors, where formal observations were at a minimum and low-quality relationships were displayed with teachers; c) imperial supervisors, where formal observations where frequent and low quality relationships were displayed with teachers; and finally d) collaborative supervisors, where regular (sometimes daily) observation of teachers took place and high quality relationships and
respect were displayed. Understanding the nature of leadership in a given situation can establish a baseline for measuring improvement. Depending on the type of leadership a given principal displays, their ability to successfully interact with teachers depends on appropriate situational adjustment. In other words, “backstage supervisors” may differ from “imperial supervisors” in how they give feedback, but each could be effective if presented appropriately. Ideally, effective, positive relationships with teachers could be nurtured by all principals.

**Feedback.**

Simple observation provides valuable data to the administrator concerning the quality of instruction, but feedback is essential to changing or improving teacher behavior. In an effort to define quality feedback in a teacher-supervisor relationship, Feeney (2007) examined written evaluations in a large western school district of 15 teachers between 1982 and 2006. In 1999, a new performance rubric was implemented in the district. Feedback prior to and post implementation was examined. Feedback in the new performance rubric was based on three criteria: a) “are based on descriptive observable data”; b) “provide characteristics of effective teaching”; and c) “promote reflective inquiry and self-directedness to foster improvements in teaching supported by evidence of student learning” (Feeney, 2007, p. 194). Feeney (2007) found that confusion exists in understanding where feedback in a summative evaluation actually promotes reflective inquiry and self-directedness. However, findings did indicate that administrative feedback did support the notion that identifying characteristics of effective teaching helped evaluators to provide quality constructive feedback. Feeney (2007) cautions the reader, however, that suggestions and recommendations alone might not necessarily engage teachers in reflective inquiry to promote self-directedness.
Brundage (1996) asserts that the traditional supervision model does not serve the needs of veteran teachers with meaningful feedback. Her findings indicate teacher dissatisfaction in a principal’s ability to understand and respond to instructional issues with a traditional 45 minute formal observation. On the opposite end of the spectrum, in a case study of written feedback to teacher candidates (i.e. student teachers) by a university supervisor, Banks and Burbank (2008) indicated that the increased influence of national and state standards movements has “pressured teacher educators to align their feedback on student teacher performance with established criteria for success in the classroom, rather than on pupil learning” (p. 5). In other words, the evaluator focused on the teacher rather than student achievement with regard to evaluation. This trend, when applied to new teachers, represents a contrast in approach of which acting administrators and supervisors must be cognizant. Effective principals must correctly identify what type of feedback is appropriate for a given teacher. Some teachers may need in-depth support, while others may simply need encouragement and positive reinforcement. Examining the degree to which teacher perceptions of feedback predict willingness and ability (follower readiness), may be indicative of a principal’s ability to appropriately adjust feedback to each teacher.

The collaborative supervisors observed by Okeafor and Poole (1992) potentially represent the best-case scenario for instructional feedback, where respect, formal and informal teacher-principal relationships, and avoidance of potentially damaging confrontations are paramount. The burden of quality feedback does not lie entirely on the shoulders of principals, however. Range et al. (2011) allude to significant frustration in administrators toward teachers’ apparent unwillingness to accept constructive feedback; especially in older teachers. According to Timperley (2005), “In order to give teachers feedback beyond generic teaching... principals
needed deep disciplinary and pedagogical content knowledge” (p. 147). If teachers do perceive principals as having adequate content knowledge, then feedback is all the more ineffective.

**Discourse.**

An integral part of the feedback process, discourse highlights the nature of interaction between the administrator and teacher. Traditionally, a formal meeting is held prior to and after formal observations. The teacher is informed of positive elements of his or her instruction, as well as areas for improvement in an officially written format. A post-conference usually follows where these areas are discussed and both the supervisor and teacher sign and date at the end of the document. Typically, the teacher is allowed to add an addendum to this formal document officially outlining areas where he or she disagrees with the supervisor, and so begins the formal record of instructional quality. These formal meetings can be either effective or ineffective, depending on the effort put forth by both parties to change or improve behavior. Brundage (1996) finds that alternative approaches such as videotaping, classroom visitations, collegiality, transparency in documenting supervisor activity related to teacher observation and empowerment instead of control are all ways to improve veteran teacher performance. According to Yager, Pederson, Yager, and Noppe (2011), “the ability to share with others and collaborate for the purposes of providing instruction conducive to enhance student development is critical given the many demands that are being put on the system” (p. 13). Arguably, these same approaches could apply to teachers of all levels as they all increase discourse quality between teachers and principals. According to Timperley (2005),

A common theme throughout this literature is that leaders engage with teachers in collegial discussion of instructional matters, coordinate the curriculum and because of the meta-analytical approach of these authors sought to be more nuanced than many others in
unpacking those leadership dimensions likely to have explanatory power in terms of raised student achievement. (p. 146-147)

Cosner (2010) goes further in stressing the importance of discourse between teachers and administrators, stating that, “improving the quality of school wide interactions not only involves initiating proactive steps to encourage and cultivate productive teacher interactions but requires decisive interventions when individual or collective teacher interactions become unproductive and unhealthy” (p. 133). Professional learning communities are an effective way of facilitating discourse among a teaching staff. In a qualitative survey of principals in Manitoba, Cranston (2011) found that five themes emerged as a result of engagement in professional learning communities:

1. Trust develops as teachers are in relationship.
2. Relational trust requires establishing group norms around risk-taking and change orientation in order to foster a safe, comfortable climate for professional growth.
3. Relational trust supports effective collaboration.
4. The principal is central in establishing a climate of trust.
5. The faculty requisite trust of the principal is paramount. (p. 64)

Just as feedback and instructional improvement are essential components of the teacher-principal relationship, so is discourse.

**Reflection and Growth.**

Teacher and administrator reflection and growth, though not specifically addressed in data-driven assessment, are critical to instructional improvement. Quantifying exactly what reflection and growth mean to the individual is extremely difficult, but its presence is nonetheless imperative in the discussion of instructional leadership. Range et al. (2011) found
that feedback and instruction born out of classroom walkthroughs were shown to be an effective way to initiate meaningful reflective conversation about instruction. New paradigm approaches such as walkthroughs may be effective tools to encourage teacher reflection and growth. Bushman (2006) explains first hand his experiences with new approaches to instructional leadership,

By the time the 2004 school year had ended, the observation and evaluation process at my high school was different from the process that most schools use. Together, the teachers and I had made observation and evaluation into a deeply reflective learning process that had begun to bear results. We began to notice that teachers talked to one another more about instruction and that teachers had an easier time seeing the logic for pursuing reform. Teachers came to the school administrators to show us how they had added or modified lessons to make them more engaging or challenging for kids. We found that our process gave teachers the opportunities they had craved to visit other classrooms and see what other teachers were doing, as well as guidance in knowing what to look for. Students enjoyed seeing their teachers come into their classrooms, and teachers enjoyed it as well. (p. 61)

The importance of reflection and growth does not solely reside in teacher. Principals, too, can benefit from reflection. Zimmerman (2011) notes that reflection can help leaders identify unproductive behaviors, attitudes toward change, beliefs about self-efficacy, strengths and weaknesses, and ultimately develop a professional learning plan.

Anxiety.

According to Polk (2006), “Teachers are constantly under pressure to produce results in the form of student achievement” (p. 23). Gold, Smith, Hopper, Herne, Tansey, and Hulland
(2010) contend that stress not only has a negative impact on individual teachers, but also impacts recruitment and retention for the profession as a whole. Teacher and administrator anxiety is not to be overlooked in today’s educational climate. According to Leary (1983), “people’s concerns with being evaluated unfavorably by others have been implicated in a number of social psychological phenomena, including conformity, prosocial behavior, self-presentation, self-serving attributions, social anxiety, self-handicapping, attitude change, compliance, and social facilitation” (p. 371). In the K-12 setting, teachers’ concern with principal evaluations or interactions may have a direct impact on their quality of life. Teachers and principals at every experience level are facing a sea change of expectations. Teacher anxiety related to principal evaluations and interactions, because of the broad nature of its implications, must be taken seriously when considering teacher-principal relationships and efficacy (Gold et al., 2010). Mintz (2007) adds that work stressors for teachers may come from “workload, role ambiguity, school structure and ethos, management style, being evaluated by others, poor working conditions and student behavior and discipline problems” (p. 155).

The very foundation of how teachers were traditionally evaluated is changing in the era of accountability. With this change may come anxiety that, in turn, affects instructional quality. In a quantitative stress survey sent to randomly selected elementary, middle, and high school principals in Eastern Kentucky, Wright and Ballestero (2011) found that 95% of survey participants indicated that school financial condition makes a difference for teachers’ stress levels. Furthermore, findings indicated that teachers aged 21 to 30 suffer the highest levels of stress as perceived by principals. Even more troubling is that 100% of principals surveyed felt that both teacher and administrative stress was increasing. If this data is even somewhat generalizable to the nation’s public schools, then it is indicative of the effects of contemporary
issues facing educators. The degree to which instructional leaders can mollify stress levels in teachers has a direct impact on student achievement.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, principals may in some cases also abuse teachers and contribute to anxiety levels. Blasé and Blasé (2006) summarize the effects of such abuse as “associated with a variety of deleterious outcomes for an individual’s physical well-being, psychological/emotional well-being, work performance, and social relationships” (p. 125). Principals as building level leaders thus may either mitigate or contribute to the stress of teachers. According to Mintz (2007) “teaching can be a joy, a wondrous opportunity to join in and be witness to the development and growth of your people, yet teaching is also commonly held to be an occupation with a high incidence of occupational stress” (p. 153).

**Follower Readiness: Willingness and Ability**

In order for teachers to appropriately respond to improvement initiatives by supervisors, they must logically display an adequate level of willingness and ability. According to Cosner (2010),

> Simply stated, interaction creates an opportunity for trust to develop; however, the quality of the interaction can lead to the development of trust or mistrust. Through interactions, individuals learn about other person’s willingness and abilities to meet expectations or fulfill commitments, and they become knowledgeable about another person’s behavioral predictability—all of which are important understandings with respect to trust formation.

(p. 119)

Hersey et al. (2001) define *readiness* in situational leadership theory as “…the extent to which a follower demonstrates the ability and willingness to accomplish a specific task;” *Ability* is defined as “…the knowledge, experience, and skill that an individual or group brings to a
particular task or activity;” and willingness as “…the extent to which an individual or group has
the confidence, commitment, and motivation to accomplish a specific task (pp. 175-176).
Readiness is thus classified under four levels, accordingly:

(1) R1: unable and unwilling: the follower is unable and lacks commitment and
motivation or unable and insecure: the follower is unable and lacks confidence; (2) R2:
unable but willing: the follower lacks ability but is motivated and making an effort or
unable but confident: the follower lacks ability but is confident as long as the leader is
there to provide guidance; (3) R3: able but unwilling: the follower has the ability to
perform the task but is not willing to use that ability or able but insecure: the follower has
the ability to perform the task but is insecure or apprehensive about doing it alone; and
finally (4) R4: able and willing: the follower has the ability to perform and is committed
or able and confident: the follower has the ability to perform and is confident about doing
it. (Hersey, et al., 2001, pp. 177-178)

Of course, it is entirely possible that organizational Follower Readiness could fall somewhere in
between one of these four levels on the continuum, but the exercise of rating Follower Readiness
certainly informs the leadership process. Potential areas in need of improvement in the teacher-
principal relationship are thus highlighted during the change process. Efforts to improve
confidence and knowledge base can be attained through better communication and recognition of
achievement. The leader is charged with first assessing the follower readiness, and then with
improving upon shortcomings in the leader/follower relationship pragmatically. The MASS
survey could potentially indicate areas in which principals should address in an effort to improve
teacher follower readiness.
In a study of 86 squads of U.S. Military Academy cadets, Vecchio et. al. (2006) found that the situational leadership theory set forth by Hersey et al. (2001) has not been afforded a consistent level of empirical verification, and that further efforts to operationalize and validate the construct of follower readiness are needed. Because of this lack of validation and proper operationalization, further exploration of the construct of Follower Readiness is examined in the present study. The construct of Follower Readiness is comprised of Ability and Willingness (Hersey et al., 2001). In order to better understand the constructs of Ability and Willingness, empirical research in concomitant areas can be helpful. For example, Tasdan and Yalçin (2010) assert that the establishment of trust in schools is very important. In a study of 151 volunteer primary school teachers, Tasdan and Yalçin (2010) found that their perceived social support did not change according to gender, major, or educational level. However, Tasdan and Yalçin (2010) did find teachers’ perceived administrative social support level and trust level have a medium positive level relationship. Trust is related to the concept of Willingness, and can thus inform the construct of follower readiness. Macmillan, Meyer, and Northfield (2004) assert that trust and its characteristics appear to follow stages of development. Louis (2007) conducted a multi-year qualitative study of high schools undergoing the implementation of a quality management change initiative. In the study, Louis (2007) found that high trust was found along with high willingness to change. Similarly, in a study of 292 teachers and administrators, Daly and Chrispeels (2008) found that trust (comprised of benevolence, respect, communication, openness, integrity, reliability, competence, and risk), is a significant predictor of adaptive and technical leadership. Principals who adhere to these principals of trust then are more likely to be adaptive to the needs of their employees. The core facets of respect “the inclusion of others,” risk “willingness to be vulnerable,” and competence “the maintenance of high expectations and
skills” are suggested as being three instrumental dimensions in predicting leadership (Daly & Chrispeels, 2008, p. 53). In other words, leadership effectiveness can be evaluated by looking at respect, risk, and competence. Similarly, in a study of authentic leaders, Toor and Ofori (2009) found that ethical leadership is positively associated with willingness of employees. In a survey of 156 teachers and 22 principals, Bird et al. (2009) found a positive relationship between principals’ authenticity and teachers’ levels of trust. Trust factors directly into willingness and is thus paramount in the teacher-principal relationship.

Carson, Carson, and Pence (2002) describe, in a study of 500 members of the Medical Library Association, that employee willingness was significantly affected by the supervisor’s use of coercive power. Teachers’ willingness to take risks is another component in willingness. In a study of teachers learning how to use formative assessment, Egan, Cobb, and Anastasia (2009) mention that “teacher willingness to take risks and learn from successes and failures, and to try again with help and support from colleagues, is another key factor in gaining the most significant benefit from community learning” (p. 41). Lumpkin (2010) asserts that learning communities are places where teachers and principals can collaborate and ultimately improve student achievement.

Ability can be examined in a number of ways. First, and perhaps the most obvious, is the teacher level of education and years of experience. These are concepts that the teacher herself contributes to the equation. Beyond that, a teacher’s ability to follow can be influenced by outside factors such as colleagues, administrative support, parents and community members, and policy. Ability can also be associated with effectiveness. Polk (2006) identifies ten characteristics of effective teachers: “good prior academic performance, communication skills, creativity, professionalism, pedagogical knowledge, thorough and appropriate student evaluation
and assessment, self development or lifelong learning, personality, talent or content area knowledge, and the ability to model concepts in their content area” (p. 23). Though Polk (2006) readily admits that this is not a comprehensive list, the connection to teacher ability is axiomatic. In summary, the concepts of ability and willingness as they relate to follower readiness can be more profoundly understood with the concepts of trust, values, and effectiveness, educational level, and experience. As asserted by Hersey et al. (2001), employees who display high levels of follower readiness are more willing and feel more able to complete a given task. In the era of education reform and accountability, teacher buy-in is paramount.

**Summary**

As policy and theory narrow to practice, the importance each has on the other becomes apparent. If policy and practice are to benefit from this codependence, then each effort should be both an informed reaction to the realities of the situation and one grounded in theory. The integrity and dignity of educational institutions can be maintained while fixing the problems inherent in their systems. From the policy end, the idea of labeling schools as failing and threatening their funding with NCLB and school choice can have a damaging effect on individual schools (Apple, 2006). According to Ravitch (2010), “choice would let thousands of flowers bloom but would not strengthen American education. It might even harm the public schools by removing the best students from schools in the poorest neighborhoods” (p. 12).

From the perspective of instructional leadership, new tactics and paradigms are emerging that deal with contemporary challenges (Glickman et al., 2009; Robbins, 2007; Ubben et al., 2011). Leaders must recognize the nature of their position and adjust to the needs of their organizational culture (Collins, 2001; Connor, Lake, & Stackman 2003; Grubb, 2009; Hersey et al., 2001; Hoy & Miskel, 2005; Kotter, 1996; Leech & Fulton, 2008; Mosoge et al., 2005;
New approaches to the teacher-administrator relationship such as walkthrough programs and the OPES are necessary to address issues of anxiety, feedback quality, discourse, instructional improvement, reflection and growth, and follower readiness—all components of the organizational culture of a typical school (Banks & Burbank, 2008; Brundage 1996; Downey, 2004; Feeney, 2007; Hersey et al., 2001; Okeafor & Poole, 1992; Range et al., 2011; Wright & Ballestro, 2011; Zepeda & Kruskamp, 2007). Current research pertaining to the teacher-administrator relationship has yet to fully explain or capture all of its essential components. The needs of instructional leadership outlined by Ubben et al. (2011) and Glickman et al. (2009) outline a more holistic approach. Despite the common sense approach to paradigm change offered in these texts, little current research outside of the few studies examining walkthrough programs seem to address the sea-change in public education from the perspective of teachers. The research questions in this study attempt to provide a diagnostic tool for practitioners as well as to compliment research done from the perspective of educational leaders and to highlight areas of future research. Future research, both qualitative and quantitative, can be better informed by exploring how teacher perceptions of Administrative Support relate to Follower Readiness.
CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine the degree to which teachers’ perceptions of Administrative Support can predict Follower Readiness. Also in question was whether Administrative Support and Follower Readiness significantly differ by demographic and other school-related information. This chapter presents the research design, participants, data collection, instruments, and data analysis.

Research Design

This study was correlational by design as it investigated the relationship among seven quantitative variables: Overall Administrative Support, Instructional Improvement, Feedback, Discourse, Reflection and Growth, Anxiety, Overall Follower Readiness, Ability, and Willingness (Mertler & Vannatta, 2010). According to Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun (2011), research is correlational when the researcher does not manipulate or intervene with the data, but rather uses an instrument to obtain it in order to look for and describe relationships. For the present study, the independent variables (quantitative) were teacher perceptions of Administrative Support (Instructional Improvement, Feedback, Discourse, Reflection and Growth, and Anxiety). The dependent variables (quantitative) consisted of teachers’ self-reported levels of Follower Readiness (Willingness and Ability). The researcher examined the degree to which subscale scores of administrative support can predict follower readiness in teachers. Both Follower Readiness and perceptions of Administrative Support are measured by the Methner Administrative Support Survey (MASS). The MASS was a 43 item survey developed by the researcher with 33 five-point Likert-Scale questions and 10 demographic items.
Participants

Participants in this study were teachers from three middle schools in Northwest Ohio. A convenience sampling method was used due to feasibility of gaining access to survey participants for data collection. Descriptive and demographic variables of each school are presented in Table 1. According to the Ohio Department of Education (2012), District A Middle School has an average daily enrollment of 673 students and consists of an approximate student demographic distribution of 2.6% African American, 82.3% White, non-Hispanic, 7.5% Hispanic, 1.5% Asian or Pacific Islander, and 6.1% Multi-Racial; 11.8% of students have disabilities. District A is classified by ODE as Urban/Suburban with a high median income. The overall PK-12 enrollment is approximately 3,000 students. District A Middle School is considered to be medium-low poverty, having an economically disadvantaged rate of 36.3%. District A has a designation of “Excellent” by the 2011-2012 ODE report card system; meeting eight out of eight state test indicators with a performance index of 101.9 out of 120. In order to meet a test indicator for grades 3-8, a school must show at least 75% of students to be at the proficient or higher level. Within District A Middle School, 100% of teachers hold at least a Bachelor’s Degree and 80.5% hold a Master’s Degree. All core academic subjects are taught by properly certified teachers. In the present study, 67% of teachers responded to the MASS (31 out of 46).

District B Middle School has an average daily enrollment of 328 students and consists of an approximate student demographic distribution of 94.5% White (non-Hispanic), with 16.3% of students having disabilities. Other racial demographics were not displayed because they constitute fewer than 10 students. District B is classified by ODE as Rural/Small Town with moderate to high median income. The overall PK-12 enrollment of the district is approximately
1,200 students. District B Middle School is considered to be medium-low poverty; having an economically disadvantaged rate of 36.5% and has a designation of “Effective” by the 2011-2012 ODE report card system, meeting eight out of eleven state test indicators with a performance index of 97.5 out of 120. All teachers at District B Middle School hold at least a Bachelor’s Degree and 89.5% hold at least a Master’s Degree. Regarding core academic subjects, 96.7% are taught by properly certified teachers. In District B Middle School, 20 out of 21 teachers participated in the MASS, representing a 95% response rate.

District C Junior High School has an average daily enrollment of 667 students and consists of an approximate student demographic distribution of 1.8% African American, 90% White, non-Hispanic, 4.7% Hispanic, 2.6% Asian or Pacific Islander, and 9.1% of students have disabilities. Classified by ODE as Urban/Suburban with a high median income, the overall PK-12 enrollment of District C is approximately 4,400 students. District C Junior High School is considered to be low poverty, having an economically disadvantaged rate of 17.1%, and has a designation of “Excellent with Distinction” by the 2011-2012 ODE report card system; meeting six out of six state test indicators with a performance index of 107.1 out of 120. All teachers at District C Junior High School hold a Bachelor’s Degree and 75.7% hold at least a Master’s Degree. Properly certified teachers instruct 97.2% of core academic subjects taught. In the present study, 66% of teachers responded to the MASS (25 out of 38). Table 1 depicts participant demographic data by district.
Table 1

Participant Demographic Data by School District (Ohio Department of Education)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>District A Middle School</th>
<th>District B Middle School</th>
<th>District C Junior High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ODE Report Card Designation</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Effective</td>
<td>Excellent with Distinction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximate District Average Daily Enrollment (ADE)</td>
<td>3,000.0</td>
<td>1,200.0</td>
<td>4,400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Building-Level Participant ADE</td>
<td>673.0</td>
<td>328.0</td>
<td>667.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ODE Classification</td>
<td>Urban/Suburban</td>
<td>Rural/Small Town</td>
<td>Urban/Suburban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ODE Poverty Status</td>
<td>Medium-Low</td>
<td>Medium-Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ODE Economically Disadvantaged %</td>
<td>36.3</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Teachers with at least a Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Teachers with a Master’s Degree</td>
<td>80.5</td>
<td>89.5</td>
<td>75.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Core Academic Subjects Taught by Certified Teachers</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>96.7</td>
<td>97.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Teachers in Participating Building*</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>38.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Teachers Participating in the MASS</td>
<td>67.0</td>
<td>95.0</td>
<td>66.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Number of teachers according to each school’s website

Instrumentation

The Methner Administrative Support Survey (MASS) was developed by the researcher due to the lack of a suitable instrument. The MASS measures two constructs. The first is teacher perceptions of Administrative Support, which addresses five subscales (Instructional Improvement, Feedback, Reflection and Growth, Discourse, and Anxiety). The second construct is Follower Readiness, which measures the subscales of Willingness, and Ability. Subscales
represent themes that emerged from the literature related to contemporary instructional leadership and the teacher-principal relationship in K-12 education.

The purpose of this research was to examine the degree to which teachers’ perceptions of Administrative Support predicted Follower Readiness in teachers. The MASS generated raw data scores from Districts A, B, and C that was used to determine how varying levels of perceptions of Administrative Support could predict Follower Readiness, and whether various demographic and school-related information significantly differed between teachers’ self-reported MASS subscale and overall scores.

Programs and research in recent years have sought to improve teacher-administrator relationships by addressing issues of teacher anxiety, feedback quality, discourse, instructional improvement, reflection and growth, and follower readiness—all components of the organizational culture of a typical school (Banks & Burbank, 2008; Brundage 1996; Downey, 2004; Feeney, 2007; Hersey et al., 2001; Okeafor & Poole, 1992; Range et al., 2011; Wright & Ballestro, 2011; Zepeda & Kruskamp, 2007). Downey (2004) states that educators should possess the following qualities (note that teacher could be replaced with any educational position):

1. Reflective, self-directed, self-analytical, interdependent teachers who examine their own practices (even those who initially are at the dependent level);
2. Teachers who are continually willing to improve their teaching practices;
3. Teachers who are committed to teaching the district curriculum student learning and working for ever higher student achievement. (p. 8)
The MASS is organized into three parts, which are described in the following sections. Existing instruments and literature will be discussed as it applies to each section of the MASS. The MASS is also presented in Appendix A.

**Part One: Administrative Support.**

Principals, as the direct superiors of teachers, contribute to teachers’ ability and willingness to do their jobs. Items 1-22 of the MASS were created to specifically measure teacher perceptions of how administrators are supporting them in instructional improvement, discourse, reflection and growth, and decreasing anxiety. Literature support for each subscale and respective items is presented in Table 2.

Part 1, consisting of items 1-22, measures Administrative Support, and applies a 5-point Likert Scale (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree). The construct of Administrative Support is measured in five subscales: a) *Instructional Improvement* (items 1-5); b) *Feedback* (items 6-9); c) *Discourse* (items 10-12); d) *Reflection and Growth* (items 13-17); e) *Anxiety* (items 18-22); and f) *Overall Administrative Support* (items 1-22).

Table 2

*Selected Literature Support for the MASS Items for Administrative Support*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Authors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Daly &amp; Chrispeels (2008); Downey (2004); Eady &amp; Zepeda (2007); Glickman et al. (2009); Lazaridou &amp; Iordanides (2011); Louis &amp; Wahlstrom (2011); Mullen &amp; Hutinger (2008); Mullican &amp; Ainsworth (2001); Range et al. (2011); Rossi (2007); Sheppard &amp; Brown (2009); Shouppe &amp; Pate (2010); Timperley (2005); Ubben et al. (2011)</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Daly &amp; Chrispeels (2008); Downey (2004); Glickman et al. (2009); Lumpkin (2010); Rossi (2007); Ubben et al. (2011); Wilcox &amp; Angelis (2012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cornelius &amp; Cornelius (n.d.); Daly &amp; Chrispeels (2008); Downey (2004); Glickman et al. (2009); Rossi (2007); Ubben et al. (2011); Wilcox &amp; Angelis (2012)</td>
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<td>#</td>
<td>Authors</td>
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<tr>
<td>---</td>
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<tr>
<td>Instructional Improvement</td>
<td>4 Angelle (2007); Beaudoin (2011); Cohen et al. (2009); Daly &amp; Chrispeels (2008); Downey (2004); Ginsberg &amp; Murphy (2002); Glickman et al. (2009); Greenlee &amp; Brown (2009); Grubb (2009); Halawah (2005); Hallinger &amp; Heck (1998); Lazaridou &amp; Iordanides (2011); Mullen &amp; Hutinger (2008); Ubben et al. (2011); Rutherford (1985); Williams (2009); Willis &amp; Varner (2010)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5 Angelle (2007); Conner et al. (2003); Daly &amp; Chrispeels (2008); Dinham (2007); Downey (2004); Glickman et al. (2009); Hambright &amp; Franco (2008); Kotter (1996); Mulford (2006); Rossi (2007); Sheppard &amp; Brown (2009); Shouppe &amp; Pate (2010); Timperley (2005); Ubben et al. (2011); Wilcox &amp; Angelis (2012)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>6 Angelle (2007); Brundage (1996); Dinham (2007); Downey (2004); Lumpkin (2010); Okeafor &amp; Poole (1992); Protheroe (2009); Wilcox &amp; Angelis (2012)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7 Cranston (2011); Rossi (2007); Wilcox &amp; Angelis (2012)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8 Angelle (2007); Banks &amp; Burbank (2008); Brundage (1996); Downey (2004); Feeney (2007); Okeafor &amp; Poole (1992)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>9 Angelle (2007); Brundage (1996); Feeney (2007); Range et al. (2011); Rossi (2007); Ubben et al. (2011)</td>
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<td>Discourse</td>
<td>10 Anderson et al. (2010); Collins (2001); Connor et al. (2003); Daly &amp; Chrispeels (2008); Ginsberg &amp; Murphy (2002); Glickman et al. (2009); Grubb (2009); Hersey et al. (2001); Hoy &amp; Miskel (2005); Leech &amp; Fulton (2008); Mosoge et al. (2005); Range et al. (2011); Rossi (2007); Timperley (2005)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11 Angelle (2010); Brundage (2007); Cosner (2010); Glickman et al. (2009); Hambright &amp; Franco (2008); Timperley (2005)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12 Brundage (2007); Ginsberg &amp; Murphy (2002); Leech &amp; Fulton (2008); Mosoge et al. (2005); Rossi (2007); Shouppe &amp; Pate (2010)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflection and Growth</td>
<td>13 Angelle (2007); Downey (2004); Feeney (2007); Mulford (2006); Mullen &amp; Hutinger (2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14 Angelle (2007); Downey (2004); Feeney (2007); Mulford (2006); Mullen &amp; Hutinger (2008); Zimmerman (2011)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15 Downey (2004); Feeney (2007); Gordon (1997); Mulford (2006); Mullen &amp; Hutinger (2008)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16 Daly &amp; Chrispeels (2008); Downey (2004); Feeney (2007); Mulford (2006); Range et al. (2011);</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17 Brundage (2007); Downey (2004); Eady &amp; Zepeda (2007); Ginsberg &amp; Murphy (2002); Leech &amp; Fulton (2008); Mosoge et al. (2005); Mulford (2006); Rossi (2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>18 Blasé &amp; Blasé (2006); Downey (2004); Leary (1983); Mullen &amp; Hutinger (2008); Ware &amp; Kitsantas (2011); Watkins (2005); Wilcox &amp; Angelis (2012); Yager et al. (2011-2012)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19 Blasé &amp; Blasé (2006); Hersey et al. (2001); Leary (1983); Mintz (2007); Mullen &amp; Hutinger (2008); Ware &amp; Kitsantas (2011); Watkins (2005); Wilcox &amp; Angelis (2012); Wright &amp; Ballestero (2011); Yager et al. (2011-2012)</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Downey (2004); Hersey et al. (2001); Leary (1983); Mulford (2006); Mullen &amp; Hutinger (2008); Ware &amp; Kitsantas (2011); Watkins (2005); Wilcox &amp; Angelis (2012); Wright &amp; Ballestero (2011); Yager et al. (2011-2012)</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>Blasé &amp; Blasé (2006); Downey (2004); Leary (1983); Mintz (2007); Mullen &amp; Hutinger (2008); Ware &amp; Kitsantas (2011); Watkins (2005); Wilcox &amp; Angelis (2012); Yager et al. (2011-2012); Zepeda &amp; Kruskamp (2007)</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Downey (2004); Hersey et al. (2001); Louis &amp; Wahlstrom (2011); Mullen &amp; Hutinger (2008); Ware &amp; Kitsantas (2011); Watkins (2005); Wilcox &amp; Angelis (2012); Wright &amp; Ballestero (2011); Yager et al. (2011-2012)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The first subscale of Administrative Support is *Instructional Improvement* (items 1-5), which describes the type of assistance offered by the school administration to teachers meant to improve classroom instruction. Such assistance could take the form of assistance with lesson or curriculum development, or by the administrator facilitating collaboration with other teachers (Downey, 2004; Lumpkin, 2010). The teacher-principal relationship is a crucial element of the principal’s responsibility to assist teachers with instructional improvement (Hambright & Franco, 2008, Shouppe & Pate, 2010). This subscale seeks to determine the quality of this specific aspect of the teacher-principal relationship.

The second subscale, *Feedback* (items 6-9), represents the type of communication between supervising administrators and faculty after formal and informal observation, as well as exchanges related to achievement data. Feedback is generally expected to not only be timely and substantive, but also be provided in way that is clear and not stress-inducing. Research suggests that feedback is a critical component of successful supervision (Brundage, 1996). Moreover, respectful teacher-principal relationships are essential components of quality feedback that impacts instruction (Okeafor & Poole, 1992).

*Discourse* (items 10-12), the third subscale, refers to the lexical field used by teachers and administrators when discussing teaching and learning at the building level. Further nuanced
meaning of discourse includes the quality of such discussions between teachers and administrators, and discussions between teachers themselves. Discourse in this sense should positively affect instruction. Engaging teachers and principals in meaningful, collegial discussion around instruction is an integral part of improving school quality (Brundage, 1996; Cosner, 2010; Timperley, 2005).

The forth subscale is Reflection and Growth (items 13-17), and represents the degree to which supervising administrators facilitate or hinder self-reflection and growth in teachers. In this context, reflection and dialogue should focus around teaching practices, personal growth, and improved communication with students, parents, and colleagues. Also related to discourse, reflection and growth can either be restrained or facilitated in the workplace. As direct supervisors, principals have an impact on teacher tendencies to be self-reflective. Range et al. (2011) points out that feedback and discussion resulting from initiatives such as classroom walkthroughs (an example of new-paradigm approaches to instructional leadership) can have an impact on meaningful reflective conversation among teachers.

The final Administrative Support subscale is Anxiety (items 18-22), which is defined as the uneasiness or stress associated by teachers with the teacher-principal relationship. Teachers may be uncomfortable during administrator observation and subsequent discussions in a way that negatively impacts instruction. As building leaders, principals can affect stress levels felt by their teaching staffs. Anxiety plays a role in employee behavior and success (Leary, 1983). Mintz (2007) draws a direct link to teacher stress and working conditions and management style. Working conditions and management style are directly related to administrative responsibilities. The subscale of Anxiety seeks to operationalize teacher stress as it applies to the teacher-principal relationship. MASS items 18, 19, and 21 were negatively worded and were reverse coded.
Part Two: Follower Readiness.

In order to create a meaningful study from the new-paradigm instructional leadership emphasis on administrative support and instructional leadership, the construct of Follower Readiness was also measured as a means to examine its relationship with Administrative Support. In Part 2 of the MASS (items 23-33), the construct of Follower Readiness is measured in the two subscales of: a) Willingness (items 23-27); b) Ability (items 28-33); and c) Overall Follower Readiness (Items 23-33). Just as with the MASS construct of Administrative Support, a five-point Likert scale (Strongly Disagree, Disagree Somewhat, No Opinion, Agree Somewhat, Strongly Agree) was used to operationalize teachers’ self-reported levels of Follower Readiness (Willingness and Ability) into quantitative data for statistical analysis. Literature support for the subscales of Willingness and Ability are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Selected Literature Support for the Methner Administrative Support Survey items for Follower Readiness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Willingness</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Angelle (2007); Au (2011); Greenlee &amp; Brown (2009); Hersey et al. (2001); Range et al. (2011); Rossi (2007); Willis &amp; Varner (2010); Wright &amp; Ballestero (2011)</td>
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<td>25</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>Angelle (2007); Au (2011); Daly &amp; Chrispeels (2008); Greenlee &amp; Brown (2009); Grubb (2009); Hersey et al. (2001); Louis (2007); Mullen &amp; Hutinger (2008); Range et al. (2011); Tasdan &amp; Yalçın (2010); Wilcox &amp; Angelis (2012); Zepeda &amp; Kruskamp (2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Angelle (2007); Au (2011); Cranston (2011); Downey (2004); Evans &amp; Human (1993); Greenlee &amp; Brown (2009); Hersey et al. (2001); Lerstrom (2008); Louis (2007); Mullen &amp; Hutinger (2008); Range et al. (2011); Wilcox &amp; Angelis (2012); Willis &amp; Varner (2010)</td>
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<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Authors</td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Angelle (2007); Au (2011); Daly &amp; Chrispeels (2008); Hersey et al. (2001); Lumpkin (2010); Polk (2006); Twigg (2008)</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>Angelle (2007); Au (2011); Hersey et al. (2001); Lumpkin (2010); Polk (2006); Twigg (2008)</td>
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<td>Angelle (2007); Au (2011); Green &amp; Cypress (2009); Hersey et al. (2001); Lumpkin (2010); Polk (2006); Twigg (2008); Willis &amp; Varner (2010)</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>Angelle (2007); Au (2011); Daly &amp; Chrispeels (2008); Hersey et al. (2001); Lumpkin (2010); Polk (2006); Twigg (2008)</td>
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<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Angelle (2007); Eady &amp; Zepeda (2007); Lumpkin (2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Apple (2006); Guthrie &amp; Peng (2010); Picus &amp; Odden (2011); Ravitch (2010); Rose (2009); Zhao (2009)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The subscales of Follower Readiness (Willingness (items 23-27), Ability (items 28-33) and Overall Follower Readiness (items 23-33) quantify the degree to which teachers self-perceive their relative levels of willingness and ability to follow their administrative leader. Willingness concerns the knowledge, experience, and skill to carry out responsibilities, while Ability concerns the confidence, commitment, and motivation to carry out responsibilities (Hersey et al., 2001). According to Cosner (2010), personal interactions (like in the teacher-principal relationship) are a critical component of trust; a building block of willingness and ability.

**Part Three: Demographic and School-Related Variables.**

In effort to attain data pertaining to the individual teaching staffs of each participating district, ten demographic and school variables were measured: a) occupation (Teacher or Other); b) sex (Male or Female); c) highest level of education (Bachelor’s, Master’s, Specialist, or Doctorate); d) age (20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69, and 70+); e) race/ethnicity (Caucasian, African American, Hispanic/Latino, Native American, Other); f) years of teaching experience (1-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16-20, 21-25, 25-29, and 30+); g) building level (PK-5, 6-8, 9-12, Other); h) whether the district has programs to improve teacher-principal relationships (e.g., walkthrough
programs, learning communities, etc.); i) school district typology (Rural, Sub-urban, Urban); and j) school building report card (Academic Emergency/Watch, Continuous Improvement, Effective, Excellent, Excellent with Distinction).

**Validity and Reliability.**

Fraenkel et al. (2012) contend that, *validity* “refers to the appropriateness, meaningfulness, correctness, and usefulness of the inferences a researcher makes” (p. 147). In the MASS, content validity was established through the use of an expert panel, a MASS pilot with focus group discussion, as well as from literature support outlined in Chapter II. The expert panel consisted of 11 experts in the areas of education administration and teaching (four professors with K-12 expertise, four practicing K-12 teachers, and three current building-level administrators). This group evaluated the subscales, respective items, and supporting literature with regard to appropriate theoretical representation in the instrument items, as well as the actual format of the instrument. The MASS was piloted to a group of practicing teachers enrolled in a graduate cohort course in a Midwestern university. A focus-group discussion followed the pilot. Feedback from the expert panel, pilot, and discussion was used to modify and improve the MASS prior to approval from the dissertation committee to conduct the actual data collection. In addition to completing the MASS, pilot study participants were asked the following questions about each test item: 1) Are the items a quality representation of their respective subscales?; 2) Are the items clearly understandable?; and 3) Are any items unnecessarily redundant? Additionally, they were asked to evaluate the format and readability of the actual MASS instrument in practice and were given space to write individual comments. For example, it was suggested that some directions be clarified (e.g., the definition of administrative support) and that some confusing test items be changed to be more easily understood (e.g., item 6: change to
“positive player/coach relationship” from “player-coach relationship” to avoid discrepancies in interpretation).

Several steps were taken to ensure the reliability of the MASS. According to Fraenkel et al. (2012), reliability “refers to the consistency of scores or answers from one administration of an instrument to another, and from one set of items to another” (p. 147). Reliability was established for the MASS by means of a paper and answer sheet pilot study meant to identify problem items, administrative issues, and to examine test item instrument reliability with the Cronbach’s Alpha test (Fraenkel et al., 2012). Finally, reliability coefficients (Cronbach’s alpha) were calculated for Overall Administrative Support, Overall Follower Readiness, all seven subscales, and the MASS instrument as a whole (see Table 4). Overall MASS, Overall Administrative Support, and Feedback all scored above 0.8 in the Cronbach’s Alpha analysis, indicating good internal consistency. The subscales of Instructional Improvement, and Reflection and Growth scored above 0.7, signifying acceptable internal consistency. Discourse, Willingness, and Overall Follower Readiness scored above 0.6, relating questionable reliability. Subscales of Anxiety and Ability both scored below 0.5 and were as such not proven internally consistent.
Table 4

Subscale Categories for the MASS Instrument and Reliability Coefficients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part</th>
<th>Subscales</th>
<th>Computation and Items</th>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discourse</td>
<td>Mean (items 10-12)</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>.659</td>
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<td>Reflection and Growth</td>
<td>Mean (items 13-17)</td>
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<td>.763</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>Mean (items 18-22)</td>
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<td>Overall</td>
<td>Sum (items 1-22)</td>
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<td>Willingness</td>
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<td>Mean (items 28-33)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>Sum (items 23-33)</td>
<td>11-55</td>
<td>.640</td>
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Procedures and Data Collection

After Human Subjects Review Board approval was received, the researcher contacted each individual school district for permission to conduct the MASS. The MASS instrument was administered in-person with the permission of the participating districts. The researcher attended staff meetings in districts B and C and team-meetings by grade level in District A. He distributed and explained, in person, the invitation to participate in the study, research consent form, the MASS instrument, and answer sheet. All participant questions were addressed prior to starting the MASS. Teachers in cooperating districts were encouraged, but not required, to take the MASS. The 15 to 20 minute survey was consistently administered according to protocol during the spring semester of 2013. Data was collected on three separate instances according to the schedule of staff meetings—District A in March, District B in January, and District C in April. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, survey participants were neither asked to provide their name, nor for any information that revealed the name of their district. Scanable
answer sheets were brought to the university technology support service to be compiled into raw data.

**Research Questions**

1. Do teachers’ perceptions of Administrative Support (*Instructional Improvement, Feedback, Discourse, Reflection and Growth, and Anxiety*) significantly predict Follower Readiness (*Willingness and Ability*)?

2. Do perceptions of Administrative Support and Follower Readiness significantly differ by demographic and school-related variables (*Efforts to Build Teacher-Principal Relationships, District, and Years of Experience*)?

**Data Analysis**

After the MASS instrument was administered in Districts A, B, and C, raw data were transferred from the answer sheets to an Excel file by the university technology support service. Excel data were then screened and uploaded for statistical analysis into SPSS. Items 18, 19, and 21 of the MASS were recoded to represent negative question item wording. Subscale scores were calculated as the average of respective item and subscale scores. In addition, *Overall Administrative Support* and *Overall Follower Readiness* were aggregated as the sum of the respective subscale items (see Table 4).

Descriptive statistics were utilized to describe and summarize survey items, subscales, and demographics (as operationalized in Table 5). Several inferential statistical tests were conducted to examine the research questions (see Table 6). Research Question One utilized both Pearson Correlation and forward multiple regression to examine the relationship of Administrative Support and Follower Readiness. Forward multiple regression was used to
identify the best combination of perceptions of administrative support subscales that predict 
levels of follower readiness in teachers (Mertler & Vannatta, 2010).

For Research Question Two, a $t$-test of independent samples was used to examine the 
significance of differences in perceptions of Administrative Support and Follower Readiness 
according to demographic data of whether participants have formal programs in place meant to 
build teacher-principal relationships such as walkthroughs, learning communities, etc.  ANOVA 
was utilized to test the significance of group mean differences for perceptions of administrative 
support and follower readiness in the demographic areas of years of experience and school 
building report card grade (Mertler & Vannatta, 2010).
Table 5

*Demographic Variable Codings*

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<td></td>
<td>3=Hispanic/Latino</td>
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<td>3=Urban</td>
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<td>School Building Report Card Grade</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1=Continuous Improvement</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2=Effective; 3=Excellent</td>
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<tr>
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<td>4=Excellent with Distinction</td>
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Table 6

*Research Questions and Corresponding Inferential Statistical Analyses*

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<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>Dependent Variables</th>
<th>Inferential Analysis</th>
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</table>
| 1. Do teachers’ perceptions of Administrative Support significantly predict Follower Readiness? | Teacher Perceptions of Administrative Support  
• Instructional Improvement  
• Feedback  
• Discourse  
• Reflection and Growth  
• Anxiety |
|                                                                                  | Follower Readiness  
• Willingness  
• Ability  
• Overall | Pearson Correlation  
Forward Multiple Regression |
| 2. Do perceptions of Administrative Support and Follower Readiness significantly differ by demographic and school-related variables (Efforts to Build Teacher-Principal relationships, by District, and Years of Experience)? | Efforts to Build Teacher-Principal Relationships  
District  
Years of Experience |
|                                                                                  | Teacher Perceptions of Administrative Support  
• Instructional Improvement  
• Feedback  
• Discourse  
• Reflection and Growth  
• Anxiety  
Follower Readiness  
• Willingness  
• Ability | T-test of Independent Samples  
ANOVA |

**Assumptions**

For this study, it was assumed that survey participants understood the questions and responded honestly and accurately. The researcher also assumed that the self-reported data could
potentially present an accurate picture of what participants believe to be qualities and shortcomings of their supervising administrators, and that answer sheets were accurately scanned and uploaded from raw data spreadsheets into SPSS (Fraenkel et al., 2012).
CHAPTER IV. RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of the Methner Administrative Support Survey (MASS) as completed by the participants of the study. A total of 76 participants responded to the MASS, a 43-item survey designed by the researcher. The MASS measured middle school teacher perceptions of Administrative Support and Follower Readiness. Results include participant demographics, descriptive statistics of MASS subscales, individual district subscale mean scores, subscale inferential statistics for Instructional Improvement, Feedback, Discourse, Reflection and Growth, Anxiety, Willingness, and Ability, as well as scores for Overall Administrative Support and Overall Follower Readiness.

Participant Demographics

A total of 76 respondents were included in the study. Thirty-one responses from School A, 20 from School B, and 25 from School C represented an overall response rate of 72% for the MASS. Of the 76 total participants, not all chose to respond to all demographic items. However, of those responding, 31% were reported as male and 69% female. The vast majority of participants (84.5%) had Master’s degrees, 14.1% had Bachelor’s Degrees and 1.4% had Specialist Degrees. With respect to age, 17.4% were 20-29 years of age, 42% were 30-39 years, 20.3% were 40-49 years, 15.9% were 50-59 years, and 4.3% were 60-69 years. The overwhelming majority of participants were Caucasian at 95.8%, 1.4% reported as Hispanic/Latino and 2.8% of respondents identified themselves as “Other”. Participants reported their experience as 11.8% having 1-5 years, 20.6% with 6-10 years, 22.1% with 11-15 years, 27.9% with 16-20 years, 7.4% with 21-25 years, 7.4% with 25-30 years, and 2.9% with more than 30 years of experience. Of the respondents, 74.3% reported that their school had Efforts to
Build Teacher-Principal Relationships in place, and 24.3% reported that they did not.

Participant demographic and school-related variables are summarized in Table 7.

Table 7

Demographics: Gender, Highest Level of Education, Age, Race/Ethnicity, Years of Teaching Experience, and Efforts to Build Teacher-Principal Relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>MASS Item #</th>
<th>Category</th>
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<td>50-59</td>
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<td>15.9</td>
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<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
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<td>30+</td>
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Descriptive Statistics: Teacher Perceptions of Administrative Support and Follower Readiness

Descriptive statistics were computed for MASS items and subscales (see Table 8). Frequencies for the 5-point Likert scale of Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree Somewhat (D), No Opinion (N), Agree Somewhat (A), and Strongly Agree (SA) are reported.

Over 70% of teachers either somewhat agreed or strongly agreed with Items One and Five in the subscale of Instructional Improvement (“Administrative support improves my instruction” and “My principal facilitates collaboration among teachers for instructional improvement”). Slightly fewer participants (67.1%) somewhat agreed or strongly agreed with Item Four (“My principal positively impacts school climate”). For Items Two and Three (“Administrative support impacts my lesson planning” and Administrative support gives teachers new ideas, styles, or techniques for instruction”), fewer than 58% of teachers either somewhat agreed or strongly agreed.

For the subscale of Feedback, 67.1% of participants either somewhat agreed or strongly agreed with Item Six (“I would describe my relationship with my principal as that of a positive player/coach relationship”), more than 70% of teachers somewhat or strongly agreed with Items Seven, Eight, and Nine (“I receive prompt feedback from my supervising administrators”, “The feedback I receive from my supervising administrators is useful”, and “When I’m given feedback, my administrator offers ways to improve that are useful to me”).

The subscale of Discourse saw generally less positive responses, with only 46% of teachers somewhat or strongly agreeing with Item 10 (“Administrative support facilitates better, more open discourse in my building”). However, over 60% of teachers either somewhat agreed or strongly agreed with Items 11 and 12 (“My relationship with my supervising administrator is
collegial rather than hierarchical” and “My supervising administrator focuses on teacher development rather than teacher conformity”).

Teachers also reported lower item scores for the subscale of Reflection and Growth than for Instructional Improvement and Feedback. Approximately 50% of participants somewhat or strongly agreed with Items 14 and 17 (“My supervising administrator engages me in dialogue that encourages self-analysis” and “Administrative support focuses on teacher growth rather than teacher compliance”). Over 60% of the teachers either somewhat agreed or strongly agreed with Items 13, 15, and 16 (Administrative support encourages me to reflect on teaching practices”, “Administrative support encourages personal growth”, and “Administrative support facilitates teacher-parent communication”).

Items 18, 19 and 21 from the Anxiety subscale (“I’m uncomfortable when talking to my supervising administrator”, “I’m worried about what my supervising administrator thinks about my performance” and “I am nervous when my supervising administrator observes me teaching”) had more evenly distributed answer selections than the other Administrative Support items; suggesting mixed feelings regarding the levels of anxiety amongst participants. For Items 20 and 22 (“My supervising administrator recognizes my level of experience and need, and acts accordingly” and “Administrative support fosters willingness to improve teaching practices”), over 70% of teachers either somewhat agreed or strongly agreed.

Regarding Follower Readiness subscale responses, with the exception of Item 33 (“Outside factors such as parents, community, legislation, improve my ability to be an effective teacher”), the vast majority of teachers either agreed somewhat or strongly agreed with the items regarding self-reported Willingness and Ability; suggesting strong self-perceptions of Follower
Readiness in participants. Item 33 had a far more even distribution of scores from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree” (10.5%, 19.7%, 14.5%, 26.3%, and 28.9%), respectively.

Table 8

*Descriptive Statistics of MASS Items*

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<td></td>
<td>SD</td>
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<td>N</td>
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<td>2.6</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>46.1</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>30.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>46.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>56.6</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>27.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Subscale scores were calculated by taking the means of respective subscale items. MASS items 18, 19, and 21 from the Anxiety subscale were negatively worded and thus reverse-coded. Table 9 provides detailed mean scores for the subscales of teacher perceptions of Administrative Support (Instructional Improvement, Feedback, Discourse, Reflection and Growth, and Anxiety), and Follower Readiness (Willingness and Ability).

Overall scores for perceptions of Administrative Support and Follower Readiness were calculated as the sum of respective items. Administrative Support individual subscale mean scores (5/5 as “Strongly Agree”) fell within the “No Opinion” and “Agree somewhat” answer choices. Scores ranged from 3.48 at the lowest (Discourse), to the highest (Feedback) at 3.87. Regarding Follower Readiness, subscale mean scores ranged between “Agree somewhat” and “Strongly Agree”, with Willingness at 4.60 and Ability at 4.51. The highest perception of Administrative Support (Feedback; 3.87) was lower than the lowest teacher perception of Follower Readiness (Ability; 4.51) suggesting that teachers’ self-perceptions were, in general,
higher than their perceptions of Administrative Support. Table 9 presents a summary of mean scores for the present study.

Table 9

Summary of MASS Factors (n=76)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part</th>
<th>Subscales</th>
<th>Calculation</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of Administrative Support</td>
<td>Instructional Improvement</td>
<td>Mean (items 1-5)</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>Mean (items 6-9)</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discourse</td>
<td>Mean (items 10-12)</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reflection and Growth</td>
<td>Mean (items 13-17)</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>Mean (items 18-22)</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>Sum (items 1-22)</td>
<td>79.00</td>
<td>13.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follower Readiness</td>
<td>Willingness</td>
<td>Mean (items 23-27)</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>0.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ability</td>
<td>Mean (items 28-33)</td>
<td>4.51</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>Sum (items 23-33)</td>
<td>49.87</td>
<td>3.58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question One: Teacher Perceptions of Administrative Support and Follower Readiness

In order to address Research Question One (Do teachers’ perceptions of Administrative Support significantly predict Follower Readiness?), Pearson Correlation and Forward Multiple Regression analyses were completed. The Pearson ($r$) correlation was computed to determine the relationships between teacher perceptions of Administrative Support and Follower Readiness. Table 10 presents the two-tailed Pearson ($r$) correlation test results.

The Willingness subscale of Follower Readiness showed significant, but weak to fair positive correlations with all the subscale scores of teacher perceptions of Administrative Support (see Table 10). Overall Administrative Support, ($r=.405$, $p<.0001$) was the strongest of the correlations with the Willingness subscale of Follower Readiness. No significant relationships were found between Administrative Support with Ability or Overall Follower Readiness.
Table 10

*Correlation Between Teacher Perceptions of Administrative Support and Follower Readiness (n=76)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administrative Support</th>
<th>Follower Readiness</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Willingness</td>
<td>Ability</td>
<td>Overall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Improvement</td>
<td>.274*</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>.158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>.362**</td>
<td>.026</td>
<td>.026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discourse</td>
<td>.293**</td>
<td>-.056</td>
<td>-.056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection and Growth</td>
<td>.397**</td>
<td>.028</td>
<td>.028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>.279*</td>
<td>.140</td>
<td>.140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>.405**</td>
<td>.071</td>
<td>.282</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p ≤ .05, **p ≤ .01

In order to determine which subscales of Administrative Support might predict Follower Readiness, forward multiple regression was conducted for the two Follower Readiness subscales of *Willingness* and *Ability* and the factor of *Overall Follower Readiness*. Three separate analyses were conducted. For each regression analysis, the five subscales of Administrative Support (*Instructional Improvement, Feedback, Discourse, Reflection and Growth, and Anxiety*) were the independent variables. No cases were eliminated during data screening. Results are presented in Table 11.

The first regression was conducted to determine which subscale(s) of Administrative Support were the predictors of *Willingness*. Regression results generated a one-factor model (*Reflection and Growth*) in predicting *Willingness* (*Partial r = .397*), $R^2 = .158$, $R^2_{adj} = .147$, $F(1,74) = 13.882, p < .001$. *Reflection and Growth* in this case accounted for 15.8% of the variance in the dependent variable of *Willingness*.

The second analysis was conducted to determine which subscales of Administrative Support were predictors of *Ability*. Regression results did not generate a significant model to predict *Ability*. 
Finally, the third regression analysis, which sought to determine which subscales of Administrative Support could predict Overall Follower Readiness, again identified the single predictor of Reflection and Growth (Partial r=.257), $R^2=.066$, $R^2_{adj}=.053$, $F (1,74)=5.221$, $p<.025$. The subscale of Reflection and Growth in this model accounted for 6.6% of the variance in the dependent variable of Overall Follower Readiness.

Table 11

Regression Coefficients for Models Using Teacher Perceptions of Administrative Support to Predict Follower Readiness subscales (n=75)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Bivariate r</th>
<th>Partial r</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Willingness</td>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>3.862</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>18.98</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reflection and Growth</td>
<td>.210</td>
<td>.397</td>
<td>3.726</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.397</td>
<td>.397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability</td>
<td>No Significant Model Generated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Follower Readiness</td>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>45.775</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>24.94</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reflection and Growth</td>
<td>1.165</td>
<td>.257</td>
<td>2.285</td>
<td>.025</td>
<td>.257</td>
<td>.257</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question Two: Demographic and School-Related Variables as they Relate to Teacher Perceptions of Administrative Support and Follower Readiness

In order to address Research Question Two (Do perceptions of Administrative Support and Follower Readiness significantly differ by demographic and school-related variables?), a t-test of independent samples was conducted to determine whether Efforts to Build Teacher-Principal Relationships (Yes or No) had a significant impact on subscales. In addition, ANOVA analyses were conducted to examine group mean differences for perceptions of Administrative Support and Follower Readiness for Years of Experience and among Districts A, B, and C.
**Efforts to Build Teacher-Principal Relationships.**

A *t*-test of independent samples was conducted in order to determine whether survey item 41, “Efforts to Build Teacher-Principal Relationships such as walkthrough programs and learning communities, etc. are in practice in your building”, had a significant impact on the subscales of Administrative Support and Follower Readiness. Participants who responded “yes” to item 41 were compared with participants who responded “no”. This MASS item was created in an effort to determine whether teachers perceived Administrative Support and Follower Readiness differently (i.e. higher or lower) and whether or not such *Efforts to Build Teacher-Principal Relationships* were perceived as being present in the workplace.

Teachers who believed such efforts were in practice (*n*=52 yes; *n*=17; no) reported higher mean scores for all subscales of both Administrative Support and Follower Readiness. Based on the results of the *t*-test of independent samples, *Efforts to Build Teacher-Principal Relationships* had a significant impact on *Reflection and Growth* (*r*^2^=.0336); *Overall Follower Readiness* (*r*^2^=.0458); *Willingness* (*r*^2^=.0371); and *Ability* (*r*^2^=.0317). Table 12 presents the results of the *t*-test of independent samples for *Efforts to Build Teacher-Principal Relationships*. However, all significant differences generated relatively weak effect sizes.
Table 12

T-test Results of Efforts to Build Teacher-Principal Relationships Comparison for MASS

Subscales (n=76)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscales</th>
<th>Yes (n=52)</th>
<th>No (n=17)</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Support (Overall)</td>
<td>80.79</td>
<td>13.60</td>
<td>74.82</td>
<td>13.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Improvement</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discourse</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection and Growth</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follower Readiness (Overall)</td>
<td>50.63</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>47.24</td>
<td>3.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness</td>
<td>4.68</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability</td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p ≤ .05 ** p ≤ .01

Years of Experience.

With regard to the demographic item Years of Experience, an ANOVA test was conducted to analyze variation and determine the significance of differences between the response categories of 1-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16-20, and 21+ years for all subscales. Table 13 presents the means and standard deviations for Administrative Support and Follower Readiness by Years of Experience. For the subscale of Instructional Improvement, less experienced teachers reported a slightly better perception (i.e., a mean score closer to the maximum score of 5) than their more experienced colleagues (M=4.27 for teachers with 1-5 years of experience; M=3.66 for teachers with 6-10 years; M=3.57 for teachers of 11-15 years; and M=3.32 with 16-20 years). However, teachers with 21+ years of experienced reported a score of M=3.98; much
closer to the teachers with less experience. This pattern was largely repeated for the remaining Administrative Support subscales of *Feedback, Discourse, Reflection and Growth*, and *Anxiety*, suggesting that teacher perceptions begin relatively high and then decline during the first 20 years of experience and then augment after 21 years. Mean scores for the subscales of Follower Readiness also followed a pattern of higher scores for less experienced teachers, lower scores for middle experienced teachers, and gradual increases to more positive scores after 21+ years of experience. The only notable exceptions in this pattern was with teachers of 6-10 years reporting a higher Willingness score, \(M=4.76\), than their peers with 1-5 years of experience \(M=4.68\), and with teachers of 11-15 years of experience rating Reflection and Growth slightly higher, \(M=3.60\), than the teachers with 6-10 and 16-20 years of experience.

Table 13

*Means and Standard Deviation Scores for Administrative Support and Follower Readiness*

*Overall and Subscale Scores by Years of Experience (n=68)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>1-5 Years</th>
<th>6-10 Years</th>
<th>11-15 Years</th>
<th>16-20 Years</th>
<th>21+ Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n=8)</td>
<td>(n=14)</td>
<td>(n=15)</td>
<td>(n=19)</td>
<td>(n=12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administerive Support (Overall)</td>
<td>84.3</td>
<td>80.6</td>
<td>77.6</td>
<td>74.0</td>
<td>88.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Improvement</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>4.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discourse</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>3.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection and Growth</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>50.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follower Readiness (Overall)</td>
<td>49.7</td>
<td>49.7</td>
<td>48.7</td>
<td>49.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The ANOVA test results of mean differences for teacher perceptions of Administrative Support and Follower Readiness yielded two areas of significance (see Table 14). *Instructional Improvement* ($F(4,63)=3.103, p=.021$) and *Feedback* ($F(4,63)=3.122, p=.021$) were shown to have significant differences as a result of *Years of Experience*. Bonferroni post hoc results indicated that teachers were significantly different from each other in terms of *Years of Experience* for *Instructional Improvement* (1-5 years and 16-20 years, $p=.021$) and *Feedback* (16-20 years and 21+ years, $p=.021$). Regarding *Instructional Improvement*, teachers with 1-5 years of experience responded with a mean score of 4.27 where their colleagues with 16-20 years only reported a mean score of 3.32. For the subscale of *Feedback*, teachers with 16-20 years reported a mean score of 3.51 whereas teachers with 21+ years of experience communicated a significantly higher mean score perception of 4.35.

Table 14

ANOVA Results for Administrative Support and Follower Readiness Overall and Subscales by Years of Teaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MASS Subscale</th>
<th>ANOVA Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Support (Overall)</td>
<td>$F(4,63)=2.323, p=.066$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Improvement</td>
<td>$F(4,63)=3.103, p=.021^*$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>$F(4,63)=3.122, p=.021^*$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discourse</td>
<td>$F(4,63)=1.802, p=.140$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection and Growth</td>
<td>$F(4,63)=2.010, p=.104$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>$F(4,63)=0.756, p=.558$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follower Readiness (Overall)</td>
<td>$F(4,63)=0.579, p=.679$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness</td>
<td>$F(4,63)=1.040, p=.394$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability</td>
<td>$F(4,63)=0.238, p=.118$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p ≤ .05
ANOVA: Individual District Comparison.

Finally, an ANOVA was run to determine whether Administrative Support and Follower Readiness subscale scores significantly differed between Districts A, B, and C. Administrative Support and Follower Readiness subscale scores for the MASS subscales, and Overall Administrative Support (110 maximum) and Overall Follower Readiness (55 maximum) are presented in Table 15.

Descriptive statistics revealed that District A had a more even distribution in comparison with District B and District C, expressing the highest mean ratings for Discourse, Anxiety, and Overall Follower Readiness, and the lowest scores for Instructional Improvement, Feedback, Reflection and Growth, and Willingness. District B scored highest in the Ability subscale, but lowest in Overall Administrative Support, Discourse, and Anxiety. District C reported the highest (most positive) perception ratings for Overall Administrative Support, Instructional Improvement, Feedback, Reflection and Growth, and Willingness; however it scored lowest in the areas of Overall Follower Readiness and Ability.

Table 15

Descriptive Statistics for Administrative Support and Follower Readiness by District (n=76)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscales</th>
<th>District A (n=31)</th>
<th>District B (n=20)</th>
<th>District C (n=25)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Support (Overall)</td>
<td>76.87</td>
<td>14.57</td>
<td>75.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Improvement</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>3.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>3.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discourse</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>3.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ANNOVA results indicated that the subscales of *Instructional Improvement* \( (p=.023) \), *Feedback* \( (p=.010) \), *Anxiety* \( (p=.029) \), and *Ability* \( (p=.009) \) were shown to significantly differ across districts. District C, though having the highest scores for *Instructional Improvement* \( (M=3.98) \) and *Feedback* \( (M=4.24) \), had the lowest *Ability* score \( (M=4.33) \) across the three districts. Districts A and B had similarly high *Ability* scores \( (M=4.59 \text{ and } 4.60, \text{ respectively}) \). Districts A and C both had analogous *Anxiety* scores \( (M=3.67 \text{ and } 3.65, \text{ respectively}) \) but District B had a significantly lower *Anxiety* score of 3.21. Table 16 depicts the ANOVA results by district.

Table 16

*ANOVA Results for Administrative Support and Follower Readiness Overall and Subscales by District*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MASS Subscale</th>
<th>ANOVA Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Support (Overall)</td>
<td>( F(2,73)=2.839, p=.065 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Improvement</td>
<td>( F(2,73)=3.959, p=.023^* )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>( F(2,73)=4.922, p=.010^{**} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discourse</td>
<td>( F(2,73)=1.351, p=.265 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection and Growth</td>
<td>( F(2,73)=1.687, p=.192 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>( F(2,73)=2.839, p=.029^* )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follower Readiness (Overall)</td>
<td>( F(2,73)=1.444, p=.243 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness</td>
<td>( F(2,73)=0.384, p=.682 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability</td>
<td>( F(2,73)=5.071, p=.009^{**} )</td>
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*\( p \leq .05 \)**  \( ^* \) \( p \leq .01 \)
Summary

The following section provides an abridged description of the findings Research Question One and Two. Table 17 provides a summary of key findings. In Research Question One (Do teachers’ perceptions of Administrative Support (Instructional Improvement, Feedback, Discourse, Reflection and Growth, and Anxiety) significantly predict Follower Readiness (Willingness and Ability)?), Pearson ($r$) correlation and forward multiple regression analyses were conducted to determine correlation between the subscales and then to determine what subscale(s) of Administrative Support were predictors of Follower Readiness. Forward multiple regression analysis revealed that the Administrative Support subscale of Reflection and Growth had some predictive capacity for Follower Readiness, as it accounted for 15.8% of the variance in the dependent variable of Willingness and 6.6% of the variance in Overall Follower Readiness.

In Research Question Two (Do perceptions of Administrative Support and Follower Readiness significantly differ by demographic and school-related variables [Efforts to Build Teacher-Principal Relationships, District, and Years of Experience]?), three statistical analyses ($t$-test of independent samples and two ANOVA tests) were conducted to delineate significant mean differences between Efforts to Build Teacher-Principal Relationships, Years of Experience, and District, respectively.

The $t$-test of independent samples revealed that the subscale scores of Reflection and Growth, Ability, and Overall Follower Readiness were significantly impacted by Efforts to Build Teacher-Principal Relationships. ANOVA results for Years of Experience established that the MASS subscale mean scores for Instructional Improvement and Feedback perceptions significantly differed between teachers by Years of Experience (0-5 and 16-20 years; 16-20 and
21+ years, respectively). District subscale score comparisons analyzed with ANOVA revealed significant differences in teacher perceptions in the subscales of *Instructional Improvement*, *Feedback*, *Anxiety*, and *Ability*. 
Summary of Key Findings

<table>
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<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Key Findings</th>
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| 1. Do teachers’ perceptions of Administrative Support significantly predict Follower Readiness? | • *Reflection and Growth* significantly predicted Willingness and *Overall Follower Readiness*, as it accounted for 15.8% of the variance in the dependent variable of *Willingness* and 6.6% of the variance in *Overall Follower Readiness*.

• No significant model was generated to predict *Ability* |
| 2. Do perceptions of Administrative Support and Follower Readiness significantly differ by *Efforts to Build Teacher-Principal Relationships*? | • *Efforts to Build Teacher-Principal Relationships* in schools reflected a significantly higher mean score in teacher perceptions of *Reflection and Growth*, *Overall Follower Readiness*, and *Ability*.
| 3. Do perceptions of Administrative Support and Follower Readiness significantly differ by *Years of Experience*? | • *Years of Experience* in participants significantly differed in terms of *Instructional Improvement* (1-5 years and 16-20 years) and *Feedback* (16-20 years and 21+ years)

• For *Instructional Improvement*, teachers with 1-5 years of experience responded with a mean score of 4.27 whereas teachers with 16-20 years only reported a mean score of 3.32.

• For *Feedback*, teachers with 16-20 years reported a mean score of 3.51, however teachers with 21+ years of experience reported a mean score of 4.35.
| 4. Do perceptions of Administrative Support and Follower Readiness significantly differ by *District*? | • ANOVA indicated a significant difference in *Instructional Improvement*, *Feedback*, *Anxiety*, and *Ability* between the 3 districts.

• District C reported the highest scores for Instructional Improvement ($M=3.98$) and Feedback ($M=4.24$), and the lowest Ability score ($M=4.33$).

• Districts A and B had similarly high Ability scores ($M=4.59$ and 4.60, respectively).

• Districts A and C both had similar Anxiety scores ($M=3.67$ and 3.65, respectively), but District B had a significantly lower Anxiety mean score of 3.21.
CHAPTER V. DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this chapter is to review the purpose and importance of the study and to explore the significant results as they relate to the research questions. Discussion on implications for principals follows, as well as recommendations for future research, improvement to the MASS instrument, and final conclusions.

Overview of the Study

The realities of a changing global economy have posed tangible challenges to our nation’s public schools (Apple, 2006; Grubb, 2009; Hartman, 2003; Kneopple & Reinhart, 2008; Ravitch, 2012; Timperly, 2011; Ware & Kitsantas, 2011; Zhao, 2009). Many key studies emphasize positive school climate (brought about by school leaders) as a hallmark of successful schools and high academic achievement (Cohen et al., 2009; Halawah, 2005; Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Lazaridou & Iordanides, 2011; Rutherford, 1985). According to Louis and Wahlstrom (2011), schools that possess cultures of excellent instruction, shared norms and values, and high levels of organizational trust are more adaptive, have better motivation and commitment, are better at conflict resolution, are more innovative, and are more effective in achieving goals. In pursuit of these goals, educational leaders should promote reflective, interdependent teachers who are committed to examining their teaching practices to improve, and are committed to student learning for higher student achievement (Downey, 2004). The findings of the study reinforce principals’ responsibility to the tenets of instructional leadership, including efforts to build teacher-principal relationships and the nurturing of a school climate that encourages reflective practice in teachers.

This correlational study examined teachers’ perceptions of Administrative Support and Follower Readiness—two constructs selected by the researcher in an effort to explore the teacher-principal relationship. Research asserts that building-level administrative support has
been shown to create and maintain a positive school climate, contribute to positive teacher morale, engender collaborative work environments, and facilitate student success (Beaudoin, 2011; Cohen et al., 2009; Halawah, 2005; Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Lazaridou & Iordanides, 2011; Rutherford, 1985; Zullig et al., 2010).

The researcher also examined whether perceptions of Administrative Support and Follower Readiness significantly differed by Efforts to Build Teacher-Principal Relationships, teacher Years of Experience, and District. The construct of Administrative Support (measured through the subscales of Instructional Improvement, Discourse, Feedback, Reflection and Growth, and Anxiety) and the construct of Follower Readiness (delineated by the subscales of Willingness and Ability) were operationalized in the Methner Administrative Support Survey (MASS). Participants were comprised of teachers from three districts in Northwest Ohio. The constructs that comprise the MASS were specifically intended to highlight specific areas within the teacher-principal relationship where more effective leadership strategies might be developed and implemented.

Findings suggest that principals’ ability to facilitate teachers’ reflection and self-analysis has an impact on teacher willingness. Additionally, results of the study show that efforts to build teacher-principal relationships, through instructional leadership, have an impact on teachers’ willingness, ability, and capacity for reflection. Findings also highlight that varying years of experience among participating teachers impacted teacher perceptions of administrative capacity to inform instructional improvement and give feedback. This suggests that teachers of various experience levels require differentiated, contextually appropriate attention with regard to instructional improvement and feedback. The significant findings of the study reinforce literature suggesting that principal leadership has a strong ability to influence teacher instruction.
and, ultimately, student achievement (Downey, 2004; Glickman, et al., 2009; Hoy & Miskel, 2005; Protheroe, 2009; Ubben, et al., 2011).

In the study, the independent variables included teacher perceptions of Administrative Support, which were operationalized in terms of *Instructional Improvement, Feedback, Discourse, Reflection and Growth, Anxiety, and Overall Administrative Support*. The dependent variables consisted of teachers’ self-reported levels of Follower Readiness, which was defined through the constructs of *Willingness, Ability*, and *Overall Follower Readiness*. *Overall Administrative Support* and *Overall Follower Readiness* represent the composites of the two constructs denoted on the MASS subscales.

The researcher examined the degree to which subscale scores of Administrative Support could predict Follower Readiness in teachers. Also examined was whether the MASS data significantly differed based upon whether teachers recognized *Efforts to Build Teacher-Principal Relationships* in practice in their building, by participant *District*, and by teacher *Years of Experience*. Findings indicated significant differences between districts in all three demographic and school-related variables. The researcher chose to explore the concept of teacher perceptions of administrative support and self-reported follower readiness because of the effect of the teacher-principal relationship on student achievement (Edgerson, Kritsonis, & Herrington, 2006). The constructs of Administrative Support and Follower Readiness were a means by which to examine to what extent the purported goals of instructional leadership actually impacted teacher *Willingness* and *Ability*. The extent to which teachers perceive themselves as being willing or able is important to the discussion of whether Administrative Support is effective because principals are the direct supervisors of teachers. The results of this study illustrate how teacher-
perceived principal leadership (Administrative Support) had a direct impact on teacher *Willingness*.

The findings of the study inform both practitioners and researchers in the areas of instructional leadership, factors contributing to teacher effectiveness, professional development, pre-service teacher training, and administrator preparation programs. Informed by his own experience as a classroom teacher, the researcher felt that teacher perceptions were of great import when considering the overall quality of a school’s culture. This personal impression was validated in contemporary research exploring school culture as a component of school effectiveness in terms of teacher willingness (Evans & Human, 1993; Lerstrom, 2008; Willis & Varner, 2010). A review of the literature on principal leadership yielded inconclusive evidence that teachers’ perceptions were considered an important component in determining building-level leader effectiveness. The MASS was developed with the intention of filling a gap in existing literature, and to give teachers more of a voice in identifying areas of strength and weakness in the teacher-principal relationship in leadership practice.

**Discussion**

In the following sections, both research questions are explored followed by a focused discussion of implications for principals seeking to improve instructional leadership. In addition to highlighting potential avenues for future research and improvements to the MASS instrument, the findings of the study reveal three areas of significance that may impact the principal teacher dynamic: *Reflection and Growth*, *Efforts to Build Teacher-Principal Relationships*, and teacher *Years of Experience*. 
Research Question One: “Do teachers’ perceptions of Administrative Support (Instructional Improvement, Feedback, Discourse, Reflection and Growth, and Anxiety) significantly predict Follower Readiness (Willingness and Ability)?”

Research Question One addressed the heart of the study; that is, whether or not the subscales that operationalize Administrative Support could assist principals in developing more effective strategies to improve the teacher-principal relationship by predicting teachers’ self-perceived Follower Readiness. For the purposes of this study, Administrative Support referred to the teacher-principal relationship in terms of informal and formal interactions related to Instructional Improvement, Feedback, Discourse, Reflection and Growth, and Anxiety.

For the Willingness subscale of Follower Readiness, weak to fair positive correlations were found for the overall and the subscale scores of teacher perceptions of Administrative Support. Though the correlations were shown to be weak to fair, they do suggest that teacher perceptions of Administrative Support do have an ability to predict teacher Willingness. Further analysis revealed that the data from MASS subscale of Reflection and Growth had a predictive ability on teacher Willingness. In other words, teacher perceptions of their principal’s ability to engender reflective practices directly predicted teacher Willingness. According to Howard (2003), “…reflection gives attention to one’s experiences and behaviors, and meanings are made and interpreted from them to inform future decision-making” (p. 197). The findings of this study suggest that perceptions of a principal’s supporting reflection and growth are related to teacher willingness.

High employee willingness is logically a desirable trait. Though no Administrative Support subscale was shown to predict the Ability subscale of Follower Readiness in the study, its consideration is nonetheless still important. Teachers’ self-perceived ability levels in this
study, though not shown to be significantly related to other subscales of the MASS, still provide valuable information to administrators regarding staff follower readiness. Hersey et al. (2001) contend that,

Even though the concepts of ability and willingness are different, it is important to remember that they are an *interacting influence system*. This means that a significant change in one will affect the whole. The extent to which followers bring willingness into a specific situation affects the use of their current ability. And it affects the extent to which they will grow and develop competence and ability. (p. 177)

Principals are the direct supervisors of teachers and, as such, have the ability to influence teacher willingness and ability through the teacher-principal relationship. The findings of the present study suggest that achieving higher levels of teacher willingness (along with the multifaceted benefits therein) is possible by encouraging teachers to be reflective.

The benefits of encouraging teacher reflection may not be limited to teacher willingness. Increased teacher willingness may in fact impact teachers’ ability as well (Hersey et al., 2001). Teachers who are both willing and able may be more receptive to the obligations brought forth by the present era of accountability. The relationship between *Reflection and Growth* and *Willingness* suggests that principals might more effectively carry out their responsibilities as instructional leaders by encouraging reflection and self-inquiry in teachers. According to Hersey et al. (2001), leaders must adjust their approach to direction based on the readiness of their followers. This concept is easily applied to the teacher-principal relationship. Hersey et al. (2001) state that,

The important thing to remember is that at the lower levels of readiness, the leaders is providing the direction—the what, where, when, and how. Therefore, the decisions are
leader-directed. At the higher levels of readiness, followers become responsible for task
direction, and the decisions are follower-directed (self-directed) (p. 181).

Based on the statements of Hersey et al., (2001), principals might adjust their approach to
encouraging teacher reflection by being more actively involved with less experienced teachers
and less directive with more experienced teachers.

The concept of teacher willingness is not necessarily limited to teacher reflection, but
may involve other variables as well. In a similar study, Tasdan and Yalçın (2010) found that
primary school teachers’ perception of administrative support had a medium-positive
relationship to trust. Louis (2007) found that trust and high willingness were characteristics of
successful change initiatives in high schools. The findings of the present study add teacher
reflection and growth as a component of employee willingness. As defined in the introduction,
Reflection and Growth represented the degree to which supervising administrators facilitate or
hinder self-reflection and growth in teachers. Glickman et al. (2009) contend that administrative
supervision should promote ongoing teacher reflective inquiry. The results of the present study
echo previous studies claiming that principals who engage in efforts to build teacher-principal
relationships and improve school climate can impact teacher Follower Readiness (Banks &
Burbank, 2008; Brundage, 1996; Downey, 2004; Feeney, 2007; Hersey et al., 2001; Range et al.,
2011; Okeafor & Poole, 1992; Wright & Ballestro, 2011; Zepeda & Druskamp, 2007).

The fact that Reflection and Growth did to some extent predict teacher Willingness
suggests that both constructs are worthy of targeted, future exploration. Building upon the
research on teacher-principal relationships, Shouppe and Pate (2010) assert that, “studies on
school climate showed a direct relationship between high student achievement and schools which
create a positive learning environment” (p. 89). Similarly, Mulford (2006) relates that
transformational principals must support the culture, structure, and vision of their district. The findings of Research Question One support both of these claims by underlining teacher reflective inquiry as a predictor of \textit{Willingness}.

\textbf{Promoting Reflection and Growth in Teachers.}

The results of this study determined that teacher perceptions of an administrator’s ability to promote \textit{Reflection and Growth} had an ability to predict teacher \textit{Willingness}. This area of significance suggests that principals might implement strategies to increase teachers’ capacity and opportunities for self-reflection. In the following paragraphs, several strategies for increasing teachers’ capacity for reflection are proposed.

Blasé and Blasé (2001) assert that effective instructional leaders promote reflection and professional growth by making suggestions, providing feedback and praise, modeling, using inquiry to solicit advice and opinions, emphasizing the study of teaching and learning, supporting collaboration among educators, developing coaching relationships, encouraging and supporting program redesign, implementing action research to inform instructional decision making, and by applying principles of adult learning, growth, and development to staff development (p. 22-23). Because \textit{Reflection and Growth} was shown to predict \textit{Willingness}, practitioners might incorporate the suggestions of Blasé and Blasé (2001) in an effort to improve teacher reflection and growth.

Additionally, in a case study of a first-year African American teacher, Tillman (2003) contends that critical reflection through reciprocal journaling between first-year teachers and their principals can not only provide a “vehicle for socializing the new teacher to a new profession and a new school, but can also (a) make explicit their thoughts, feelings and expectations; (b) facilitate and improve communication; and (c) be a key strategy in the
mentoring process for first-year teachers in urban schools” (p. 228). Sung, Change, Yu, and Chang (2009) propose that electronic teacher portfolios (supported and enhanced by multiple measures such as discussion forums, guided journaling, and self and peer assessments) can be an excellent tool to promote teacher introspection and to draw connections between reflection and practice. Video analysis of teaching has also been shown in the research to facilitate introspection in the area of teaching practices (Tripp and Rich, 2012).

The process of reflective teaching is not meant to be solely directed at the teacher, however. Students’ backgrounds and needs are also a valuable consideration in the reflective process. Howard (2003) suggests that critical reflection is “…a process of improving practice, rethinking philosophies, and becoming effective teachers for today’s ever-changing student population” (p. 201). Teachers have much to gain by involving culturally relevant pedagogy into their reflective practices (Howard, 2003). From a practical standpoint, school leaders and teachers might use time not only for reflection upon teaching practice, but also to consider the degree to which they are addressing individual student needs. There are many ways to determine whether such needs are adequately addressed in the classroom. Tucker, Jones, Straker, and Cole (2003) contend that course evaluations can be an effective tool to facilitate teacher and student reflection by collecting data on student satisfaction and concerns relevant to specific elements of a given course. Though traditionally a university practice, course surveys may have a place on a more broad and institutional scale in the K-12 setting as well.

When considering the various strategies proposed in the research for promoting teacher reflection, one is naturally led to consider the tremendous allocation of time required to carry out such endeavors. In order for these strategies for reflection to be effective in helping educators to grow, real, tangible work time must be provided to teachers and principals. Somehow within the
constraints of a workweek filled with teaching and compliance to local, state, and federal mandates, educators must set aside moments for reflection and growth.

**Implications for practitioners.**

If contractual obligations allow, principals might meet with teachers once per week after school to engage in learning teams, by grade level, or in other distributions targeted specifically at growth areas in the building. Further, principals could add elements to existing teacher evaluation processes that include targeted introspection (e.g. on specific lessons or on more global curricular challenges) if specific reflection activities are not already included in a state or district teacher evaluation system. This could include making time within the workweek for teachers to work with mentors, to construct and reflect on portfolios, or to journal. In place of large-group professional development (i.e. whole building or whole district), principals could instead divide teachers into more focused groups to target specific areas in need of improvement. Following the suggestions for collaboration among educators of Blasé and Blasé (2001), for example, teachers in a specific subject such as French might be allowed to meet with all French teachers across a district or even perhaps be given time to collaborate in a shared location with teachers from other districts.

If such initiatives are to succeed, they must be embraced by all stakeholders and implemented at all levels. For example, time previously set aside for large group professional development might be reassigned to allow time for teacher/mentor collaboration, portfolio work, or other forms of self analysis. Districts might also provide time during the normal school days (i.e. substitutes) to allow teachers to work on reflective practice.
Research Question Two: “Do perceptions of Administrative Support and Follower Readiness significantly differ by demographic and school-related variables (Efforts to Build Teacher-Principal Relationships, District, and Years of Experience)?”

The MASS was originally conceived as an instrument that could be administered to multiple districts at multiple grade levels for large-scale comparison. Because of the relative homogeneity of the actual sample (three middle schools), many of the general demographic questions from the MASS were deemed not relevant in statistical analysis. Despite the similarities between districts in terms of location and relative demographics, several significant differences emerged that paint a picture of unique, building-specific cultures and climates. The researcher chose to focus on three areas from Part 3 of the MASS: 1) whether schools had in place efforts to improve teacher-principal relationships; 2) whether responses varied based upon years of experience; and 3) whether teacher responses varied from one building to another.

Research Question Two was conceived in an attempt to flesh out specific differences between and within buildings. For the purposes of this study, “Efforts to Improve Teacher-Principal Relationships” referred to building-level engagement efforts such as walkthroughs and learning communities that have an impact on teacher-principal relationships. Ubben et al. (2011) states that the principal is the “facilitator of the instructional process” (p. 29). According to Hersey et al. (2001), leaders must adjust their leadership style to followers according to individual readiness. In the role of facilitator of instructional processes, the principal must also adapt to the various demographic representations of the staff. As stated the literature review, Gordon and Patterson (2006) assert that leadership is “relational, negotiated, and context specific” (p. 206). Research Question Two explored these assertions in the context of the teacher-principal relationship.
Efforts to build teacher-principal relationships.

Analyses of item 39 (yes or no), “Efforts to build teacher-principal relationships such as walkthrough programs, learning communities, etc. are in practice in your building” yielded significantly higher subscale mean scores for Reflection and Growth, Overall Follower Readiness, Willingness, and Ability among teachers who responded “yes”. The present study found that in practice, efforts like walkthroughs and learning communities had a direct impact on engendering teacher reflection, willingness, and ability. This suggests a link between teacher-principal engagement and teacher Follower Readiness. In addition, initiatives like professional learning communities and walkthrough programs may positively impact school climate. Ubben et al. (2011) define learning communities as organizations that are “…concerned with growth and continuous self-renewal of both individuals and organizations. The leader is, therefore, responsible for building organizations where people are continually expanding their capabilities to shape their future—leaders are responsible for learning” (p. 25).

Lumpkin (2010) asserts that learning communities facilitate collaboration between teachers and principals that result in improved student achievement. Cranston (2011) states that schools can be considered professional learning communities when principals lead initiatives to develop adult relationships that contribute to change in classrooms and whole schools. Angelle (2007) further contributes to this notion by placing educator “collaboration, shared decision making, reflective practice, quality professional development, and shared goals” as contributing factors to organizational culture and successful leadership (p. 59). The findings of the present study again reinforce how the teacher-principal relationship (in this case taking the form of building level efforts to build relationships) can contribute to teacher Follower Readiness. The aggregation of contemporary research assertions coupled with the findings of the present study
suggest that principals who focus on collaboration, shared decision-making, teacher growth, and effective communication can manifest improvements in teacher willingness and ability. This assertion echoes those of Gordon and Patterson (2006), that

Leadership is not quality of a particular individual but rather a relational process that takes place over time and in particular settings. Leaders do not stand alone, but rather negotiate power with others in their school communities. These negotiations allow for leaders of different types, types that meet the requirement of their constituents. There is no one-size-fits-all model to successful leadership. (p. 224)

The significant findings from Research Question Two also support Downey (2004), who asserts that contemporary instructional leadership includes relationships between teachers and principals that promote reflective, interdependent teachers who are committed to improved teaching practices. Cohen et al. (2009) reference a body of literature that links positive school climate with student achievement. The studies demonstrate the linkages between instructional leadership, teacher-principal relationships, climate, and student achievement. These connections reinforce the assertions of Hambright and Franco (2008), who state that increased focus on accountability and achievement has placed added emphasis on instructional leadership because it displays how elements of Administrative Support impact teacher Willingness.

**Implications for practitioners.**

As previously stated, participants in the study who believed their school engaged in Efforts to Build Teacher-Principal Relationships responded with higher mean score perceptions of Reflection and Growth, Overall Follower Readiness, and Ability. This, of course, suggests that such efforts are beneficial to the teacher-principal relationship. Borgemenke, Blanton, Kirkland, and Woody (2012) suggest that school leaders must gain the support of stakeholders
through “clarifying desired outcomes and methods for reaching common goals” (p. 57). In other words, Borgemenke et al. (2012) suggest that taking the time to ensure full understanding and trust amongst stakeholders is critical for leadership through change initiatives; going on to advance that in their study,

In the successful scenarios, change leaders (the involved, informed principal and assistant principal) took time to build relationships through daily interaction and regularly scheduled, focused capacity building sessions (collaborative teacher training sessions) and teachers had tangible proof of their leaders’ ongoing support, encouragement, and engagement in the improvement process. The focus remained at all times on instructional improvement, and teachers felt empowered rather than blamed. (p. 57)

Furthermore, in a study related to learning community generation in schools, Zepeda (2004) found that,

Data revealed that the principal’s efforts were critical in creating the conditions necessary to build a learning community. Past issues had to be acknowledged, and past solutions and decisions revisited. Basic issues, such as establishing trust and rapport with teachers, were the first steps in building a climate conducive to teacher learning. (p. 150)

Zepeda (2004) advocates that principals should model learning behavior to teachers, purposefully craft parallel learning opportunities for staff that reflect shared values, relinquish top-down control, and promote teacher growth and development. Spanneut (2010) adds that professional learning communities can provide a platform on which to promote trust-building, hold collegial conversations, share knowledge, identify resources, and revisit, reflect upon, and refine instructional beliefs. The findings of the study further reinforce how efforts to build teacher-principal relationships can improve teacher Follower Readiness and capacity for
reflection and growth. Mullen and Hutinger (2008) also emphasize this finding by suggesting that principals are in a unique position to promote teacher development and student learning through the use of study groups within professional learning communities. Study groups provide a means to support school reform by allowing teachers to work together, learn, and share in leadership (Mullen & Hutinger, 2008).

Teacher Years of Experience, Instructional Improvement, and principal Feedback quality.

As stated in the data analysis, the subscale mean scores for each category of Years of Experience in the MASS followed a similar trend across its categories. Perceptions of Administrative Support were generally higher in the 1-5 Years of Experience sample, declined as teachers gained more experience, then rose sharply after teachers had 20 or more years of experience. For the purposes of this study, Instructional Improvement described the type of assistance offered by the school administration to teachers as a means to improve classroom instruction. The findings of this study suggest that there are significant differences in perceived principal contribution to Instructional Improvement between new teachers (1-5 years), and teachers with 16-20 years of experience. The emergent trends in the Years of Experience analysis suggest that principals should vary their instructional improvement approaches among teachers based on their years of experience.

The findings of the present study mirror the suggestion of Brundage (2007) who notes that veteran teachers (as opposed to less-experienced teachers) might be more responsive to a teacher/principal dynamic that stresses encouragement and reassurance of experiential knowledge. In the study, Feedback was defined as the quality of communication between supervising administrators and faculty after formal and informal observation, as well as
exchanges related to achievement data. This includes all the varying interactions between teachers and principals related to feedback; from formal pre-and post evaluation meetings to informal discussions in passing. The overall findings of this study in the areas of *Reflection and Growth*, *Willingness*, and *Feedback* are largely in agreement with Feeney (2007), who explores a definition of feedback as being based on observable data, providing characteristics of effective teaching, and promoting reflective inquiry and self-directedness that supports evidence of student learning.

Hambright and Franco (2008) suggest that the principal’s role in instructional improvement is critical and, at times, difficult in the era of accountability. The study results point to feedback and efforts to improve instruction, and an understanding that principals will focus differently when working with teachers of varying years of experience. Brundage (1996) found that veteran teachers require encouragement and reassurance from supervisors rather than efforts to improve their content-area knowledge. As with *Instructional Improvement*, the mean differences reported in the present study may reinforce the findings of Brundage (1996) because they highlight *Feedback* as an area of significant difference between teacher groups by years of experience.

While there may be many explanations for the response variation among the age groups, this trend may suggest that teachers lose faith in the capacity of administrators to provide support over the course of the first 20 years of their careers or perhaps that teachers need less administrative support as they move toward mastery. The fact that all categories saw an improved teacher perception of Administrative Support after 20 years possibly suggests that teachers may have grown to better appreciate the teacher-principal relationship (formed mutual respect, perceive support as providing for their needs, etc.), or, perhaps, that they no longer view
the relationship as important and feel compelled to rate Administrative Support higher for some other reason not explained by the present study. Fessler (as cited in Lynn, 2000) presents eight stages within the teacher career cycle: 1) preservice; 2) induction; 3) competency building; 4) enthusiasm and growth; 5) career frustration; 6) career stability; 7) career wind-down, and 8) career exit (p. 179). The present study looked at teacher years of experience across only five categories (1-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16-20, 21+ years), but findings do suggest that perceptions of administrative support and follower readiness do vary throughout the teaching career cycle. The findings of this study support the existence of stages of development and differences between novice, intermediate, and experienced teachers.

Eros (2011) cites a body of research arguing that considering teachers as simply pre-service or in-service does not sufficiently respect the varying phases and stages of a teacher’s career. Instead of merely placing teachers in two categories, Eros (2011) suggests that though definitions of teacher stages vary, all definitions suggest that, “a range of the number of years’ teaching experience, an increase in self-confidence, a shift from self-focus to student-focus, and an interest in greater pedagogical mastery” have an impact on determining a teacher’s stage in the career cycle (p. 66). Additionally, external factors from individual teachers’ personal environments (i.e. family, positive or crisis events, individual dispositions, or vocational outlets) may also be worthy of consideration when seeking understanding of teachers’ career cycles (Lynn, 2000). Principals who recognize the potential for insight and individualized approaches to the teacher-principal relationship based on career stages might more effectively utilize feedback in the instructional improvement process. The results of this study reinforce the need for individualized leadership approaches by highlighting instructional improvement and feedback, where teacher perceptions significantly differ by years of experience.
Ways of addressing individualized leadership approaches can take many forms. Eros (2011) adds that “indeed, the one-size-fits-all, one-time workshop or session may have an increasingly smaller amount to offer” (p. 68). In the context of this study, it seems clear that teachers of varying experience levels perceived their principals differently in the areas of Instructional Improvement and Feedback. Though present study did not seek to determine whether or not principals differentiated their approaches to Instructional Improvement and Feedback, the fact that significant differences in teacher perceptions were present support the assertions of Eros (2011).

Implications for practitioners.

In a qualitative study of school teachers, Masuda, Ebersole, and Barrett (2012) found that though teachers of varying career stages all expressed a love for learning and a need for professional development to be relevant to their personal teaching contexts. Early career teachers were more willing than their more experienced colleagues to attend voluntary professional development opportunities. Therefore, it may be beneficial for principals to critically approach the usefulness and broad application possibilities of professional development initiatives. Principals might tailor professional development with teachers based upon knowledge of the varied experience levels of their teaching staffs.

Mentoring programs, from both within and outside of the organization, that continue throughout the teaching career, may also be a useful strategy for principals. In a survey of college professors, Peluchette and Jeanquart (2000) found that early and middle career stage professors with mentors from multiple sources were more productive than peers with no mentors or with mentors from a single source. Applied to the K-12 setting, principals might reach out to the community, to family and friends of employees, or perhaps to similar neighboring
institutions for mentors willing to work with teachers of varying experience (Peluchette & Jeanquart, 2000).

In a survey of career phases and teacher preferences for professional development options, Compton (2010) found that teachers at all levels and all phases selected “having opportunities to connect with other teachers” as the overall most preferred professional development activity (p. 52). Additionally, Compton (2010) found that teachers in all career stages found benefit in “crafting new methods of instruction” and “receiving support for reflection about the results of the work I do in my classroom” (p. 53). Concerning Instructional Improvement, principals might focus on setting up situations where teachers can collaborate, share knowledge, and discuss issues pertinent to their content areas.

Based on the findings of this study, principals might show sensitivity to the fact that teachers of varying experience levels perceive things differently and in doing so improve the overall effectiveness of the teacher-principal relationship. Principals could consider the changing perceptions of Administrative Support in teachers when designing appropriate professional development related to instructional improvement.

In terms of practical application of the findings, a younger teacher might be given different content and delivery suggestions during professional development than his more experienced colleagues. For example, a novice teacher may need more help with delivery of a new concept rather than the content itself (e.g., a new technologically advanced teaching tool) whereas his older, more experienced colleagues might need more help with learning the content related to the new technology.

In a small-scale action research study of principal-teacher feedback, Anast-May, Penick, Schroyer, and Howell (2011) found that teachers often “do not experience frequent and extended
observations, systematic feedback and a structure to promote reflective inquiry” (p. 6). The results of the study indicate that teachers perceive their principal’s feedback differently based on Years of Experience. If the findings of Anast-May et al. (2011) are even somewhat generalizable, then principals might attempt to dedicate more time to frequent observations, systematic feedback, and promoting reflective inquiry in teachers in an effort to more appropriately address the needs of teachers in varying stages of their career. For example, Roberson and Roberson (2008) suggest that principals can help ensure success by establishing regular meetings and provide meaningful feedback to first-year teachers; adding that meetings should provide an opportunity for principals to get to know novice teachers’ personalities and needs, share meaningful information, and provide opportunities for new teachers to share experience and expertise with other first-year colleagues.

**Significant differences between participating districts.**

The final analysis in the study concerned differences between the three participating districts. Though the central focus of the study was to examine which Administrative Support subscales best predict Follower Readiness, comparing mean scores between participant districts presented an opportunity to explore three different building cultures and leadership teams. The results of the MASS by district can potentially inform professional development for both teachers and principals alike by highlighting ways in which individual buildings have different perceptions of Administrative Support and Follower Readiness; hinting at the need for individualization and contextualization of leadership from building to building.

As reported in the data analysis, mean scores for the MASS subscales and overall Administrative Support and Follower Readiness differed between Districts A, B, and C. Teacher perceptions of Administrative Support and Follower Readiness highlight overall differences in
teacher perceptions between districts. District C reported the highest scores for *Instructional Improvement* and *Feedback*, and the lowest *Ability* score. Districts A and B had similarly high *Ability* scores, indicating that they were confident in their self-perception in terms of ability to perform their duties. Again, there be many root causes of high teacher self-perceptions of ability, but it may indicate that their professional development and positive reinforcement needs are being met.

Both District A and District C had similarly high *Anxiety* scores. High *Anxiety* scores in this study indicated that teachers felt nervous or anxious when communicating with their supervising administrators generally, when being formally evaluated, or in terms of their administrator’s ability to foster willingness and to improve teaching practices.

Administrative Support total scores showed significant differences between the three Districts. Differences between Districts A, B, and C in the subscales of *Instructional Improvement, Feedback,* and *Reflection and Growth* suggest that principals in each district were perceived differently by their teachers. Interestingly, District C had the highest *Overall Administrative Support* score, yet it had the lowest *Ability* score. Further research would provide deeper explanation, but perhaps a low ability score is indicative of an over-reliance on administrative support. Qualitative interviews with teachers who indicated low ability levels may point to causes of low self-perceptions of ability. These findings do not necessarily suggest low or high principal efficacy; however, they do suggest areas of relative difference in teacher perceptions that could inform future research in individualized approaches to leadership. The building-specific contextual differences outlined in the study convey a critical message to practitioners and researchers that there may be many factors to consider beyond the scope of the principal and teacher effectiveness. The results of the analysis advance the notion that
differences in teacher perceptions do occur, even among districts that may appear, on the surface, relatively homogeneous. Other discreet, but significant variables were present between districts, such as district size, report card designations, and poverty levels. If replication of this study finds that smaller districts have significantly different teacher perceptions in certain subscales than larger ones, practitioners might then adapt their practice to reflect needs of teachers in smaller or larger settings. The fact that the three schools surveyed in the present study were, on the surface, relatively similar in many ways yet reported significant differences in teacher perceptions reinforces the need for principals to be cognizant of, and attentive to, the individual needs of their teachers.

**Implications for practitioners.**

These district-to-district differences undergird the necessity for contextualization and individualization when researching the constructs of Administrative Support and Follower Readiness and will support a mixed methods approach in further study and replication of the MASS. Gordon and Patterson (2006) conclude that “in some schools teachers look for Top-down decision-making, while in others they want to be included in the decision-making process” (p. 224). Building-level practitioners can use this information to reinforce that their actions do, in fact, impact individual organizations and must also accept that individual buildings require leadership approaches that are tailored to the needs of teachers.

Principals and other school leaders should gather information to make informed decisions that strive to accommodate the needs of teachers and students in each discreet context. Central administration should seek to hire principals with the ability to acknowledge and foster the contextual differences from building to building. In order to carry out leadership efforts that actually impact teacher-principal relationships, building climate, and student growth, individual
building leadership teams must engage in honest self-diagnostic and problem-solving activities related to instructional leadership.

**Suggestions for Principal Leadership Practice**

In summary, research demonstrates that school leaders who dedicate attention to the teacher-principal relationship, and teacher reflection and growth may ultimately impact student achievement (Edgerson & Kritsonis, 2006; Shouppe & Pate, 2010; Zimmerman, 2011). Principals who actively engage with teachers and create professional learning communities may enjoy the benefits of a healthier building climate, increased awareness of instructional practices, and ultimately better instruction. Though the results of the study suggest the need for principals to address the areas of *Instructional Improvement, Feedback, Discourse, Reflection and Growth,* and *Anxiety.* The researcher contends that the principles in both the research and the study stress the importance of teacher-principal relationship. The findings of this study support the following strategies suggested in the literature for enhancing the teacher-principal relationship:

1) Taking tangible steps to promote reflection and professional growth in teachers by supporting practices such as:
   
   a. reciprocal journaling for new teachers and principals;
   
   b. electronic teacher portfolios (supported and enhanced by multiple measures such as discussion forums, guided journaling, and self- and peer assessments);
   
   c. providing resources and time for teachers to use videos of their teaching for self-analysis;
   
   d. promoting culturally relevant pedagogy that recognizes diverse student needs;
   
   e. encouraging or requiring teachers to give course evaluations to students;
2) Taking the time to build teacher-principal relationships through daily interaction and capacity-building sessions;

3) Gaining the support and trust of stakeholders during change initiatives with the establishment of schools as professional learning communities;

4) Using the platform of schools as professional learning communities to initiate collegial conversations and gain understanding of teachers’ instructional beliefs;

5) Setting up time for teacher collaboration (between teachers with similar experience levels and between more and less experienced colleagues);

6) Implementing mentor programs that include mentors from multiple sources and that are available to teachers of all career stages;

7) Considering individualized/contextualized professional development strategies over one-size-fits-all methods;

8) Employing a decision-making framework for relationship-building that keeps in mind external factors that may influence teachers’ progression through the career cycle.

9) Consideration by central office administration for individualized/contextualized needs in building-level leadership staffing choices;

10) Observing teachers more frequently and providing systematic feedback.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Protheroe (2009) suggests that further studies exploring the power of innovative instructional leadership such as the walkthrough concept are needed. The findings of the present study pertaining to *Efforts to Build Teacher-Principal Relationships* significantly impacting teacher perceptions of *Reflection and Growth, Overall Follower Readiness, Willingness, and Ability* suggest that Protheroe (2009) was correct. Moreover, the suggestion of Knoeppel and
Rinehart (2008) that “research is needed on the effects of principals’ behaviors, training, and characteristics on student achievement” (p. 506) is also relevant to this study if one agrees with the assertion of Ubben et al. (2011) that the teacher-principal relationship are a critical component of student success. Toor and Ofori (2009) found that ethical leadership is positively associated with willingness of employees. Future use of the MASS could also include a subscale pertaining to ethical leadership in order to replicate and add to the Toor and Ofori (2009) research. Also, Carson et al. (2002) discovered that willingness of 500 Medical Library Association employees was significantly affected by the supervisor’s use of coercive power. Different types of perceived power relationships could also be explored in future studies.

The ethical nature and research-inspired elements of the teacher-principal relationship can take many forms in actual practice. All methods of communication (i.e. verbal/non-verbal, informal/formal, articulated vocally or in writing) can be tailored to reflect emergent themes related to ethics, teacher-principal relationships, building climate, and teacher efficacy, and student growth. Using the constructs of the MASS (Administrative Support and Follower Readiness) along with methods that report data related to ethics could inform research in both areas. The key is encouraging educational leaders to use tools like the MASS in conjunction with professional development in a sincere and sustained effort to improve student growth. The snapshot provided by a building faculty taking the MASS is simply that: a snapshot.

Another component of the teacher-principal relationship is the non-instructional leadership element. The managerial side of building-level Administrative Support (e.g., discipline, scheduling, overall availability/accessibility of administrators, how administrators mitigate external pressures, etc.) may also be worthy of consideration. This managerial relationship could be especially powerful when compared to what extent and the original five
MASS subscales impact *Willingness* and *Ability* in an effort to determine what most impacts teacher Follower Readiness. Adding a subscale to the MASS concerning managerial leadership may also inform future study.

The research questions in the present study could be complimented by also surveying principals’ self-reported Administrative Support and teacher Follower Readiness. The question items of the MASS (most beginning with some form of “My supervising administrator” or “Administrative support”) could be re-formulated to allow principal self-reporting and conducted concomitantly with the original MASS teacher perception survey. Examining the differences between teacher perceptions and principal self-perceptions of Administrative Support and Follower Readiness could illuminate areas of divergence. Discrepancies in perceptions of Administrative Support between teachers and principals could be a powerful means by which to identify teacher needs and principal efficacy.

Other methodological applications may also help the MASS continue to add to the body of knowledge on teacher-principal relationships. For example, the MASS could be used as a pre-post tool to measure the effectiveness of a treatment such as professional development for principals, teachers, or entire buildings in areas of instructional interest to a particular district. Additionally, mixed-methods approaches could be a very effective way (especially in the area of *Reflection and Growth* because of its predictive capacity of *Willingness* in the present study) to inspire a staff to work on targeted areas (instructional leadership for principals and *Reflection and Growth* for teachers) in a way that might increase teacher willingness to participate in innovative changes aimed at increasing student achievement.
Suggestions to Improve the MASS Instrument

The constructs operationalized in the MASS have potentially broad application capacity because of their ubiquitous presence in contemporary research exploring instructional leadership and teacher effectiveness. However, the researcher believes there are several ways in which the MASS could be improved, adapted, and replicated in future research endeavors. The MASS is certainly not without flaws. Despite an extensive literature review, expert panel, pilot study, focus group, dissertation committee suggestions, and feedback from the Human Subjects Review Board, the researcher would propose several changes upon reflection.

First, regarding the low reliability scores of the researcher-created items for Anxiety and Ability (Cronbach’s Alpha scores of 0.476 and 0.447), factor analysis could highlight specific items that largely detract from subscale internal consistency. These MASS items could then be either placed elsewhere among the subscales, amended, or eliminated entirely and replaced.

Participants’ response to Item 33 (n=76) on the MASS, “Outside factors (ex. parents, community, legislation) improve my ability to be an effective teacher” saw a far more even distribution and variance of response (10.5% Strongly Disagree, 19.7% Disagree Somewhat, 14.5% No Opinion, 26.3% Agree Somewhat, and 28.9% Strongly Agree). Item 33 might have been better placed in the Anxiety subscale, as it differed very much from the other questions constituting Ability. Factor analysis might reinforce this assumption.

The very powerful MASS survey item 41, “Efforts to build teacher-principal relationships such as walkthrough programs, learning communities, etc. are in practice in your building” might also be expanded and more profoundly explored in future iterations of the MASS instrument. Identifying which specific efforts are being carried out and researching (quantitatively or qualitatively) how these efforts relate to the five subscales of Administrative
Support may target specific areas on which to focus professional development in a given building. For example, if an individual building is implementing a walkthrough program, then the MASS could include a section specifically devoted to teacher perceptions of the walkthrough program’s capacity to affect instruction and teacher Follower Readiness. Mixed method qualitative focus groups, observations, and teacher interview protocols derived from MASS results could further explore the concepts of Administrative Support and Follower Readiness. Emergent themes from qualitative research endeavors would not only more fully explore a specific building, but also inform content of the MASS itself.

The lack of predictive capacity of the other subscales of Administrative Support (Instructional Improvement, Feedback, Discourse, and Anxiety) on Willingness, Ability, and Overall Follower Readiness not only suggests a need to further improve the operationalization of each construct of the MASS, but may also suggest that these constructs are not as directly tied to each other as is suggested in the literature. The researcher-created item questions for Anxiety and Ability had especially low Cronbach’s Alpha scores (.476 and .447), and should, as such, be revised prior to replication of the present study.

The MASS subscale Willingness, the richer and perhaps more pertinent component of Follower Readiness based on the regression analysis results, might be further explored and expanded in the MASS. Teacher Willingness was operationalized in the MASS by asking teachers to rate their confidence, commitment, and motivations to carry out professional duties, to take risks that might improve instruction, and to follow school change initiatives. Cranston (2011) states that relational trust can be achieved when safe group norms (risk-taking and change orientation) are established. Elements from research related to employee trust might also be
included in subsequent iterations of the MASS based on the findings related to teacher

*Willingness.*

The MASS should have future utility by building on its present content, tailoring its specificity to individual district contexts, and including additional constructs and methodological approaches to more profoundly explore and target assessment of teacher perceptions as they relate to Administrative Support and Follower Readiness. Examining and reinforcing each construct represented in the MASS will ensure more reliable data.

**Conclusion**

The findings of this study reinforce that school leaders should be encouraged to examine their practices in relation to engaging in efforts to build the teacher-principal relationship and instructional improvement. Additionally, the study findings suggest that school leaders should consider teacher anxiety, willingness, and ability in their approaches to instructional leadership. During data collection, several participants and principals verbally expressed their satisfaction participating in the study, stating that it gave voice to teachers, and gave principals a formative assessment tool that could gauge staff feelings at a given moment. The findings of this study suggest that practitioners could use the MASS to target emergent, building-specific themes from the constructs of Administrative Support to improve teacher willingness. Assessing individual building climate and then addressing areas of deficiency in professional development might improve the overall teacher-principal relationship, including both informal and formal interactions. By learning how teachers perceive practices related to the construct of Administrative Support and Follower Readiness, building leadership teams might better feel the pulse of their building and adjust the nature of dialogue with teachers accordingly.
The limitations of the present study suggest that certain changes in delivery could improve the quality and consistency of data. For example, the MASS was administered in the three districts on different dates during the school year (District A in March, District B in January, and District C in April). It is possible that teachers’ perceptions may have changed during this time due to many factors (ex. proximity to vacations or testing dates, outside factors such as millage results, etc.). In the future, conducting such a survey on a less variable timeline might result in more reliable and consistent data.

The findings in this study not only reinforce what research suggests is a significant component of effective teacher-principal relationships, but also inform educational leaders of the importance of engendering reflective teaching practices in teachers. The presence of efforts to build teacher-principal relationships in schools was shown to reflect higher teacher perceptions of Reflection and Growth, Overall Follower Readiness, and Ability. This not only suggests that such efforts make a difference, but also that facilitating teacher reflection is an important element in Follower Readiness. Differences and trends in the perceptions of teachers of varying years of experience in the areas of Instructional Improvement and Feedback provide awareness to principals that experience matters in terms of how teachers perceive Administrative Support. Comparing the three districts’ individual scores also suggests that both practitioners and researchers should consider contextualization and individualization of efforts to improve teacher-principal relationships.

Beyond the changes to the MASS instrument proposed in this chapter (factor analysis, individual item changes, expansion into other constructs), perhaps the most immediate consideration for future research would be to expand the participant base. Participants in this study where overwhelmingly white (95.8%), and from a common region in Northwest Ohio.
Further study with a larger participant base and in more diverse schools (i.e., different states/regions, ethnicity, rural/suburban/urban, building levels, and perhaps even post-secondary teaching institutions) could provide valuable data for comparison and further validation of the MASS. Additionally, mixed method research where the MASS is used as a primary tool to identify themes for qualitative research could inform both practitioners and scholars. The MASS might also be adopted to assess principals’ self-reported levels of Administrative Support and teacher Follower Readiness, and include constructs that describe the managerial side of the teacher-principal relationship. In states where principal evaluation systems are in place, the findings of an improved MASS might provide valuable formative assessment data to be used in conjunction with student growth measures to measure principal efficacy.

In terms of increasing teachers’ willingness and ability to improve their practices for increased effectiveness, the results of the study found that principals can engage in practices such as professional learning communities or walkthrough programs. Principals can also address teacher-principal relationships by differentiating efforts to improve instruction and feedback to teachers of varying years of experience. By encouraging teachers to be reflective and to participate in dialogues that encourage self-analysis, principals can not only improve relationships with teachers, but actually increase teacher willingness to take risks and collaborate in change initiatives aimed at augmenting student growth outcomes.
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APPENDIX A

Methner Administrative Support Survey (MASS)

The purpose of this survey is to identify teacher perceptions of administrative support and follower readiness. Survey items are intended to identify your perceptions of how your principal/building-level administrator(s) affect your self-reported levels of administrative support and follower readiness. If you do not wish to answer a question, please feel free to leave the numbered response blank on your answer sheet. Please complete the following survey using a number 2 pencil on your answer sheet. You are not required in any way to complete this survey or provide any personal information.

Part 1: Administrative Support

- *Administrative Support* refers to the contribution (either positive or negative) that principals/building-level administrators make toward the ability and willingness of teachers to be effective.
- The term “Principal” and “supervising administrator” are interchangeable in this context. Please interpret this as whatever you as a teacher would call your supervisor.
- When responding to the MASS, you are encouraged to think about the formal and informal interactions (meetings, hallway interactions, formal/informal observations, etc) you have with individual supervising building level administrators, and the overall building-level administrative teams.

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. The rating scale is as follows:

- **A** (Strongly Disagree)
- **B** (Disagree Somewhat)
- **C** (No opinion)
- **D** (Agree Somewhat)
- **E** (Strongly Agree)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Improvement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Administrative support improves my instruction.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Administrative support impacts my lesson planning.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Administrative support gives teachers new ideas, styles, or techniques for instruction.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 My principal positively impacts school climate.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5 My principal facilitates collaboration among teachers for instructional improvement.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feedback</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 I would describe my relationship with my principal as that of a positive player/coach relationship.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 I receive prompt feedback from my supervising administrators.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 The feedback I receive from my supervising administrators is useful.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 When I’m given feedback, my administrator offers ways to improve that are useful to me.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourse</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 Administrative support facilitates better, more open discourse in my building.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 My relationship with my supervising administrator is collegial rather than hierarchical.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 My supervising administrator focuses on teacher development rather than teacher</td>
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### Reflection and Growth

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Administrative support encourages me to reflect on teaching practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>My supervising administrator engages me in dialogue that encourages self-analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Administrative support encourages personal growth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Administrative support facilitates teacher-parent communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Administrative support focuses on teacher growth rather than teacher compliance.</td>
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### Anxiety

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>I’m uncomfortable when talking to my supervising administrator.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>I’m worried about what my supervising administrator thinks about my performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>My supervising administrator recognizes my level of experience and need, and acts accordingly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>I am nervous when my supervising administrator observes me teaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Administrative support fosters willingness to improve teaching practices.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Part 2: Follower Readiness

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. The rating scale is as follows:

- A (Strongly Disagree)
- B (Disagree Somewhat)
- C (No opinion)
- D (Agree Somewhat)
- E (Strongly Agree)

#### Willingness

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>I have the confidence to carry out my responsibilities as a teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>I have the commitment to carry out my responsibilities as a teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>I have the motivation to carry out my responsibilities as a teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>I am willing to follow change initiatives in my school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>I am willing to take/feel comfortable taking risks in my teaching.</td>
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#### Ability

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>I have the knowledge to carry out my responsibilities as a teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>I have the necessary experience to carry out my responsibilities as a teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>I have the appropriate skill-level to carry out my responsibilities as a teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>I am a competent teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>I am committed to lifelong learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Outside factors (ex. parents, community, legislation) improve my ability to be an effective teacher.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Part 3: Background
If you do not wish to respond to a question, please feel free to leave it blank on your answer sheet.

34. **Occupation:**  
   A: Teacher  
   B: Other

35. **Sex:**  
   A: Male  
   B: Female

36. **Highest Level of Education:**  
   A: Bachelors Degree  
   B: Masters Degree  
   C: Specialist Degree  
   D: Doctoral Degree

37. **Age:**  
   A: 20-29  
   B: 30-39  
   C: 40-49  
   D: 50-59  
   E: 60-69  
   F: 70+

38. **Race/Ethnicity:**  
   A: Caucasian  
   B: African American  
   C: Hispanic/Latino  
   D: Native American  
   E: Other

39. **Years of Teaching Experience:**  
   A: 1-5  
   B: 6-10  
   C: 11-15  
   D: 16-20  
   E: 21-25  
   F: 25-29  
   G: 30+

40. **Building Level:**  
   A: PK-5  
   B: 6-8  
   C: 9-12  
   D:  
   Other

41. **Efforts to build teacher-principal relationships** such as walkthrough programs, learning communities, etc. are in practice in your building.  
   A: Yes  
   B: No

42. **School District Typology:**  
   A: Rural  
   B: Sub-Urban  
   C: Urban

43. **School Building Report Card:**  
   A: Academic Emergency/Watch  
   B: Continuous Improvement  
   C: Effective  
   D: Excellent  
   E: Excellent with Distinction
Dear Educator:

You are kindly requested to participate in this study that is a part of the dissertation research. The researcher, Mr. Gereon Methner, a doctoral student in the Leadership Studies program at Bowling Green State University, is responsible for this study. The study examines teacher perceptions of administrative support, and how those perceptions relate to self-reported follower readiness. As a classroom teacher, you have been identified as a qualified participant, and as such you are important to this study. You are first requested to read the information below; and if necessary, you may ask questions for more clarification before deciding whether to participate or not. You must be at least 18 years old to participate in this study.

You will be requested to honestly complete the Methner Administrative Support Survey (MASS). The survey will take about 20 minutes to complete. There are no risks anticipated for your participation in this study beyond those you normally encounter in daily life or during performance of routine physical or psychological tests or examinations. While there are no direct benefits to you, information obtained from the survey will be used to understand issues related to the teacher-principal relationship—an important part of your job as teachers.

Information you provide will remain confidential and your identity will not be revealed. I will protect confidentiality and your responses throughout the study and publication of the report. Your school will remain anonymous by using a pseudonym. You will also remain anonymous to all but the researcher, who will have access to the data / information you provide. Moreover, your identity will not be revealed in any published results. I will store your information in a very secure manner by: locking all research material in locked filing cabinet, using password protected computer database, and presenting results in summary report form (without names of participants).

You are free to decline participation in this study, or you may withdraw your participation at any point without penalty. Your decision whether or not to participate in this research study will have no influence on your present or future status at your school or on your relationship with Bowling Green State University. If you are not satisfied with the way this study is presented, you may discuss your concerns with me, Mr. Gereon Methner, using my telephone (715-304-9198) or through my e-mail.
(methngv@bgsu.edu); or write a letter addressed to Mr. Gereon Methner using above given address. In addition, you may reach the office of Dr. Judy Jackson May, who is my advisor, using her telephone (419-372-7373) or e-mail (judyjac@bgsu.edu). Furthermore, you may contact the Chair, Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB) at BGSU for concerns about your rights as a research participant through 419-372-7716, or hrsb@bgsu.edu. By completing this survey and submitting it you are indicating your consent to participate.

Sincerely,

Gereon Methner
Doctoral Candidate
Invitation to Participate in the Study

January 2013

Dear Fellow Educator,

I am a full-time doctoral student in Leadership Studies at Bowling Green State University in Bowling Green, Ohio. I am conducting a study on teacher perceptions of administrative support and self-reported follower readiness in the state of Ohio, and would sincerely appreciate your participation. The purpose of this study is to examine the relationships between teachers and their supervising administrators and to explore whether administrative support impacts teacher follower readiness. Data is being collected through a paper survey that will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete.

Please understand that your participation is completely voluntary and anonymous and there are no anticipated risks to you. Your decision to participate or not will neither impact your relationship to Bowling Green State University, nor to your place of employment, and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time. The survey asks teachers to rate their agreement with statements about their supervising administrators, their own willingness and ability to perform their duties as a teacher, and to provide basic background information. The completion of the survey constitutes consent to participate in the study.

Your participation in this study will help us better understand the relationship dynamics between teachers and principals, and hopefully provide insight for professional development programs and further research. Information you provide will remain confidential and your identity will not be revealed. I will protect confidentiality and your responses throughout the study and publication of the report. Your school will remain anonymous by using a pseudonym. Participants will also remain anonymous to all but the researcher, who will have access to the data / information you provide. Moreover, your identity will not be revealed in any published results. I will store your information in a very secure manner by: locking all research material in locked filing cabinet, using password protected computer database, and presenting results in summary report form (without names of participants).

If you have any questions or concerns about this research project, please feel free to contact me, Gereon Methner, using my telephone (715-304-9198) or through my e-mail (methngv@bgsu.edu). In addition, you may reach the office of Dr. Judy Jackson May, who is my advisor, using her telephone (419-372-7373) or e-mail (judyjac@bgsu.edu). Furthermore,
you may contact the Chair, Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB) at BGSU for concerns about your rights as a research participant through 419-372-7716, or hrsb@bgsu.edu.

I thank you in advance and look forward to learning about the dynamic between teachers and principals thanks to your participation!

Sincerely,

Gereon V. Methner  
Doctoral Candidate, BGSU
APPENDIX D
Human Subjects Review Board Approval

Thank you for your submission of Revision materials for this project. The Bowling Green State University Human Subjects Review Board has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

The final approved version of the consent document(s) is available as a published Board Document in the Review Details page. You must use the approved version of the consent document when obtaining consent from participants. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require that each participant receives a copy of the consent document.

Please note that you are responsible to conduct the study as approved by the HSRB. If you seek to make any changes in your project activities or procedures, those modifications must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please use the modification request form for this procedure.

You have been approved to enroll 400 participants. If you wish to enroll additional participants you must seek approval from the HSRB.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office. All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must also be reported promptly to this office.

This approval expires on November 2, 2013. You will receive a continuing review notice before your project expires. If you wish to continue your work after the expiration date, your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date.

Good luck with your work. If you have any questions, please contact the Office of Research Compliance at 419-372-7716 or hrsb@bgsu.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence regarding this project.